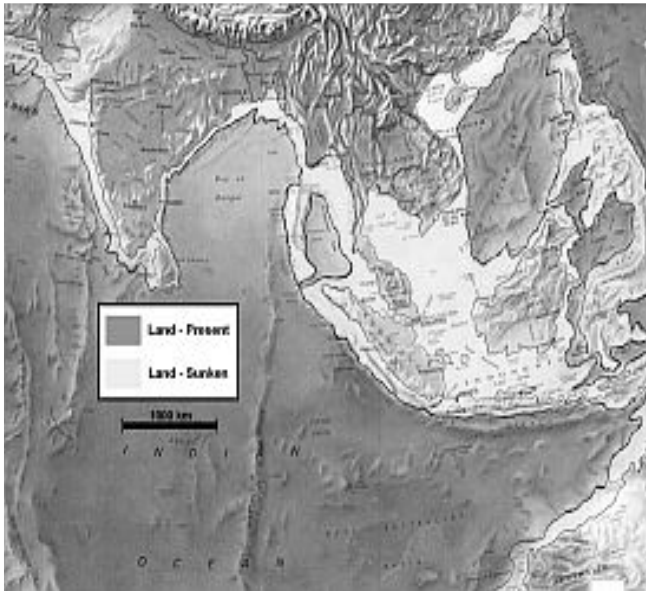


Tamil Civilization

N. Nandhi Varman



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General Secretary Dravida Peravai

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[This article was written to be published in a book planned by e-magazine Voice of Voiceless which appeared in Canada. Neither the book got published nor does the e-magazine survive today]

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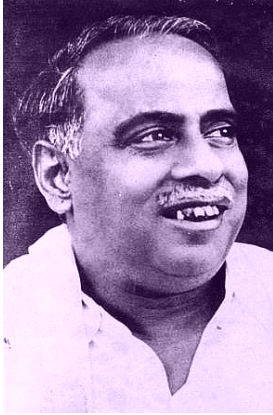
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IN THE THRESHOLD.....



Dedicating to the memory
of my mentor Aringnar
Anna....

Thanking the
Management of New
Indian Express, leading
Indian English daily
which allowed me to write
for 52 weeks in the
Pondicherry Edition of its

Week End pages, I have attempted to compile
these articles on Tamil culture, history,
literature, music, and personalities in the field
of arts. All these articles came to public light
through New Indian Express.

The Pondicherry Government organization
Puducherry Institute of Linguistics and
Culture organized a National Seminar on
Indus Valley Civilization, and my paper which
appeared in the PILC Journal of Dravidic
Studies, is also in this book. The paper on
Nagaland meant for a book planned by Voice
of Voiceless e-magazine of Canada, but did not
see the print too finds place here.

Hope that readers will have a bird's eye view
on Tamil culture and civilization.....

N.Nandhivarman
General Secretary Dravida Peravai

IS INDUS VALLEY THE CRADLE OR CATACOMB OF DRAVIDIAN CIVILIZATION?

Nandhivarman General Secretary Dravida Peravai

Paper presented at the National Seminar on The Indus Valley : A Review of Recent Research organized by the Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture on 28.9.2003 at the Chief Secretariat Conference Hall and inaugurated by the Pondicherry Education Minister K.Lakshminarayanan and Presided by Dr.Pa.Maruthanayagam, Director of Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture.

Humanity is engaged in an endless quest to unravel the mysteries of Nature. The origin of the human race, the original homeland of the first human being, the first civilization on earth, the birth of the language and its multiplicity and the puzzles of continental drifts, sea floor spreading, etc are some of the fields wherein new evidences are coming out every now and that which makes such a quest towards truth a must for proper construction of the history of the human race. The greatness of the Indus Valley Civilization and various clues that it provides to discover the first civilization on earth needs to be evaluated in the context of changing needs of our times, wherein claims and counter claims or even doctored claims are made to establish the Dravidian or the otherwise content of that civilization.

In India Sir John Marshall deserves the credit to be the first scholar to suggest that the language of the Indus Valley civilization was Dravidian. Piero Meriggi in his book “

Zur Indus Schrift “ (which means On the Indus Script) written in the German language was of the opinion that *Brahui*, spoken even now in Baluchistan, is the Dravidian Language which must be the original language of the Harappans. Henry Heras in his book “Studies in Proto-Mediterranean Culture” turned more than 1800 Indus texts into Proto-Dravidian sentences.

In their book “Proto-Indica: 1979, Report on the investigation of the proto-Indian texts by Yu.V.Knorozov, M.F.Ali Bedil and B.Ya.Volchok have carried out a computer analysis of sign distribution in the Indus texts and had proven beyond an iota of doubt that it belonged to the Dravidian language family. David W.McAlphin in his book “Proto-Elamo-Dravidian and F.C.Southward in his book “The Reconstruction of Prehistoric South Asia language contact” had successfully used the Dravidian roots to reconstruct the language of the Indus Valley. As Dr.Ira.Mathivanan had too proven that the Indus script is Dravidian, there is no necessity to question the collective wisdom of all these scholars, yet there are schools of thought, which want to deny the Dravidian roots of the Indus Valley civilization.

Let me quote elaborately from Professor Irafan Habib, who puts up a strong case for the Dravidian family language. “The Dravidian languages constitute the second largest family in India. Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada belong to the Southern group, Telugu (in Andhra) and Gondi (in widely scattered pockets of Madhya Pradesh) to the South Central, Kolami (in Maharashtra) to the Central, Kurukh (in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh

and Nepal) and Brahui (Baluchistan) to the Northern. There are also many minor languages attached to these different groups. Tamil has the longest literary history going back at least to the first century B.C By comparing the vocabularies and grammar of these languages, a hypothetical Proto-Dravidian language can be reconstructed, which, it is assumed, must have been spoken before the speakers of the Dravidian languages separated from each other. The use of certain retroflex sounds (such as hard l, n, r, rh, the tongue having to curl back just under the hard palate in order to pronounce them) is one of the most common traits in the Dravidian languages, while such retro flexion is absent in both Austro-Asiatic and Indo-European languages spoken outside the Indian sub continent. It is therefore a reasonable conjecture that it is Proto-Dravidian or its early successors, from which the Austro-Asiatic and Indo-Aryan languages derive their retroflex consonants. This inference has many consequences. Retro flexion as well as a few words (more than 2 dozen) of possible Dravidian origin is present in the Rig-Veda. Since retro flexion is totally absent in the Avesta, the earliest Iranian Text, which is very close to Rig-Veda in vocabulary and grammar, one must assume that Rig-Veda reciters introduced retro-flexion in pronunciation of even the most impeccable Indo-Iranian words, under the influence of the pronunciation of the speakers of the earlier local languages. Since the Rigvedic hymns were composed in the area between the Hindukush and the Ganges, this makes it very likely that some of the substrata languages of Punjab or Upper Indus basin at the time were

members of the Dravidian family. The likelihood is increased by the geographical proximity of the Brahui language, whose speakers are today to be found in northeastern Baluchistan, not far from Punjab. Brahui's own case for antiquity has been strengthened by David MacAlphins discovery of the links between Elamite. Similarly connections have been seen between Proto-Dravidian and the Uralic languages of Eastern Europe and Siberia, and this would also suggest that there were once Dravidian speakers in latitudes much further to the north than today. There are strong hints towards linking the official Indus language to the Dravidian family", says Irfan Habib.

Shareen Ratnagar in her book "Understanding Harappa Civilization in the Greater Indus Valley says "Harappan language was probably agglutinative or a language which added suffixes to an unchanging root. This feature is characteristic of the Dravidian language family than the Indo-Aryan text; the rig Veda shows Dravidian influence (indicating that early Indo-Aryans had some contact with Dravidian speakers) make it likely that the language of the Harappans was a Dravidian one. (Note, also, that Brahui, spoken in the hills of southeastern Baluchistan is a Dravidian language)

It will be of great interest to note that Ainul Hag Faridkoti in his book "Urdu zaban ki Qadeem Tareekh (Urdu: The History of ancient Urdu) and in 'Pre-Aryan origin of Pakistani languages: A monograph" claims that the first languages of the present day Pakistan are Dravidian.

Bertil Tikkanen “On Burushaski and other Ancient substrata in the north western South Asia” asserts that Pakistani languages have a Dravidian substratum. The evidence for the presence of the substratum is the presence of retroflex consonants which do not exist in Iranian or European members of the Indo European family of languages.

Iravatham Mahadevan’s book.” The Indus script texts, concordance and tables “helps in deciphering the Indus script, some claim... Sathur Sekaran’s valuable contribution in proving that Indus script is Dravidian also deserves special mention. Dr.N.Mahalingam in his article in the book” Ancient India “observes thus: “though eminent scholars like Heras, Parpola, Kamil Zvelebil, FairService and Mahadevan have already clearly established that the Indus valley script has to be read only as a Dravidian language, it is the decipherment of the script of the Indus by Dr. M.Ramachandran and Dr.R.Madhivanan which is the first cogent and systematic effort which can be stated as the test of vigorous scholarship’

In another scholarly analysis by M. Sundar Raj in his article Tamil Grammar Rules (Tholkappiam) a new truth emerges. He lists the Gods found in Rig-Veda as 33 gods, and gives a break up. Adityas 12, Vasus 8. Rudras 11, Vasatkara 1, Prajapathi1, so totaling 33. The assertion of Rig-Veda to restrict the number of gods to 33 baffles M.Sundar Raj, which goes into the question of the rationale of this particular scheme of classification. He refers the Tamil Grammar Tholkappiam

particularly on alphabets and finds those 33 letters in Tamil script to be the clue for this particular scheme of classification of 33 gods in Rig-Veda.

12 Vowels, 18 consonants, 1 *Aidham*, 1 *Kutrialugaram*, 1 *Kutrialigaram* together makes to the 33 letters. This is a marvelous new line open for research. M.Sundar Raj's views need further deeper consideration.

“ At first stage of impact between the highly developed Dravidian civilization and the nomadic and vigorous Aryan people, a process of civilization of the latter took place, as elsewhere, leading to the birth of Sanskrit language and the evolution of Sanskrit literary conventions from the Dravidian base.”

The first result was the comings into being of a mixed language, which we today call Sanskrit. The material for the literary compositions in this language were taken from the culture of the teachers, who obviously were Dravidians, and who found in this process a convenient and secretive way of preserving their culture with a key only known to themselves. These early compositions must have been the work of small groups or schools, working in conclaves independently, but with the same inherited material. Long afterwards an attempt appears to have been made to bring together and systematize the whole material, whence the Vedas, as we know now emerged. But by this time the Dravidian origin of the language and culture was forgotten, not merely due to the lapse of time, but also apparently as an outcome of cultural elimination. Thus the key to the

puzzle has remained lost now”, opines M.Sundarraaj.

The admixtures and adulterations carried out in the languages of the invaders and the subdued indigenous people need a specialized study to establish the origins of many concepts including the Godhood. An impartial enquiry will bring to light which are the Dravidian or Aryan origins of many social customs, religious practices and literary products including grammar, and unless an unbiased attempt is made in search of truth fabricated truths will rule the roost. It is true that cultural elimination had left a deep adverse impact on the Tamil literary history.

The burning away of palm-leaf inscriptions in *Bogi* fire, and the habit of throwing Tamil texts in *Adi-perukku* are designed well to serve the process of cultural elimination well, thereby Tamils lost numerous texts which could have been of greater help in reconstruction of the literary and other history. In this age of Net-citizens, Tamil citizens of various countries are engaged in preserving the palm leaf texts as digital texts, and of particular mention is that of Mr.Na.Kannan who resides in Germany (tamilheritage.org). In Karnataka and in Orissa there are many stone inscriptions and cave paintings which have to be deciphered, and like U.V.Swaminatha Iyer if many Tamilians look for Tamil Manuscripts from Museums and other places all over the world , lot of hidden history could be unraveled.

So far we have seen the opinion of various scholars who firmly held that the text and language of the Indus script is Dravidian. But there is a school, which is hell bent upon

denying anything about “ Dravidian “ and they call it as a British conspiracy to divide and rule such Aryan invasion theories were invented, forgetting their own *rigvedic* hymns. In nutshell this is what that school goes on shouting from all possible platforms. Why so? Let me quote John Hinnells and Eric Sharpe from their book “Hinduism “which will reveal the designs of these cultural eliminators.” Until the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization, the development of literature and culture in India was always credited to the Aryans. In 1920 archaeologists announced the discovery of extensive urban ruins in the Indus valley, which predated earliest archaeological sources and this caused scholars to re-examine their views on the different phases of Indian culture. The Rig Veda that speaks in such derogatory terms of the enemies subdued from by the Aryan tribes gives the impression that they were all savage barbarians. “

There is another scholar who speaks about the conspiracy not of the British but of the nomadic invaders. “The Brahmins for centuries have degraded the original inhabitants of India with the intention of self elevation, preservation and oppression. These ancient dwellers in India were Dravidians, and in fact, their culture had developed a highly sophisticated way of life. The existence of Brahui tribe in Baluchistan to the west of Indus, who speak a Dravidian language like South Indian Tamil, gives the evidence that a migration of people or culture did occur. Also the Harappa religion shows many similarities with the elements of Hinduism, which are especially popular in the present Dravidian

culture. "(A.L.Basham in The Wonder that was India p 27)

However in pursuance of an attempt to systematically bury the truth an assertion began to be widely made that the Indus Valley civilization was not only Aryan, but also Vedic or even post-vedic." Some professional archaeologists have embraced this view, though it might be contrary to what they had held earlier. The basic argument advanced by this school is that the main features of the Indus Civilization are quite consistent with those of the society and culture inferable from the rig veda." Irfan Habib smashes all these assumptions put forward as arguments that make no sense. "We shall consider the question of the reconcile of the Rig Veda, with what we know of the Indus valley civilization. Since the Rig-Veda is preeminently a religious text, consisting mainly of hymns to deities, the crucial area of comparison must be religious one. What the seals and copper amulets tell us is that the Indus deities were mostly zoomorphic, represented by the various animals, the most prominent animal being the Unicorn, the mythical one horned hump less bull, other animals include the bison, elephant, humped bull and rhinoceros, in the order of the frequency of the occurrence. The great *rigvedic* deities are however, practically all anthro-phormic in conception (that is idealized human or superhuman forms) and zoomorphism is practically absent. Sarama is a dog like female deity in the late rigvedic hymn, but even here the contrast continues. The Indus seals give no evidence of a similar canine deity (nor are the dog itself pictured on the seals). We may note that the cow so highly

priced in the *Rig-Veda* and at least at one place deified, is not at all shown on the seals, where the honour belongs to the bull alone. The horse and the camel, sought in gifts by the *rigvedic* seers, are absolutely absent from these seals. On the other hand, the *rigveda* shows no perception of the mythical unicorn, or assign any sanctity to the animals like the elephant, rhinoceros or tiger. The *rigveda* has nothing similar to the composite animals (tiger's body, bull's horn, and elephant trunks, for sample) on the Indus seals. Among the Indus day figurines found in private houses, representations of the Mother Goddess are particularly numerous. The *rigveda* has no female deity that is either as prominent or similarly linked to any fertility cult. There is no *rigvedic* goddess either, who has the body of a tiger, as an Indus cylinder seal. The lack of similarity continues when one considering the ways of disposing the dead. The Indus people buried their dead and there is no evidence at all of cremation. The *rigveda* on the other hand, recognizes cremation as the principal method, using the word non cremation (an-agnidaghal) for burial."

Whatever logic is there in this argument, the sadists who want to deny Dravidian people of anything that are great; continue their single point agenda to spread untruths. The Discover Magazine in the following beautiful words describes the greatness of the Dravidian civilization. "No golden tomb, no fancy ziggurats. Four thousand years ago city builders in the Indus valley made deals, not war, and created a stable, peaceful and prosperous culture. Neither Vedas nor the Bible made any mention of this magnificent

civilization. Yet they were a highly organized and stupendously successful civilization. They built some of the worlds first written languages, and thrived in an area twice the size of Egypt and Mesopotamia for 700 years. “

Well we have to look at the way Indus came to be associated with this civilization. “Harappa, in Sahiwal District of West Punjab, Pakistan had long been known to archaeologists as an extensive site on the Ravi river, but its significance as a major city of an early great civilization remained unrecognized until the discovery of Mohenja daro near the banks of the Indus, in the Larkana District of Sind by R.D.Banerjee in 1922. Sir John Marshall, the then Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India used the term Indus civilization for the culture discovered at *Harappa* and *mohenja daro*, a term doubly apt because of the geographical context implied in the name Indus and the presence of cities implied in the world civilization.” Says Irfan habib in his book the Indus Valley Civilization “p 16.

In spite of the fact that this civilization is known as Indus because of the geography and is called as Dravidian because of the language and culture, yet the cultural eliminators are for centuries at pains to remove all traces of Dravidian content or to be more specific, the indigenous people’s greatness, whose culture they had taken over by way of admixture and adulteration.

In 1893 V.Warren, an American wrote the book “The Paradise found or the Cradle of Human race at the North Pole. Heavily

adopting the views put forth in that book Balagangadhara Tilak wrote a book 'The Artistic home of Vedas'. He and other of his school of thought, till date are burning midnight oil to aryanize a Dravidian culture. In Ukraine during 1966 Yu Kanygin brought out his book "The Path of the Aryans: The role of Ukraine in the spiritual History of Mankind". This book says that Rama's birthplace is not Ayodhya but near the Driper river. It says Rama is from a tribe known as Druid. It will be of interest to know that Rama, whether a ruler or mythological hero, is a Dravidian born in the tribe of Druids near the Driper River. While such etymological similarities drive home a picture, the cultural eliminators have now started to claim that the word Brahman has got its roots in Abraham. Abraham becomes Brahman. If that were so Christians and Hindus have common origin, and the propaganda of hate has no rational basis.

In Russia a book G.Grinevich released Praslavianskaya Pismennost in 1993. In that book he claims to have deciphered the Indus script and according to him it belongs to the Slavs. The language spoken by the people of Indus valley is Slav, he goes on. He even claims that the word Russia has its etymological roots in Sanskrit. Russ denotes white people and from such Sanskrit word Russia came, he says. He further adds that Motcham (Heaven) is the root for the name of the city of Moscow. All these planned propaganda apart, now we are facing with a situation wherein the Indus valley civilization is being renamed or re-christened, in order to sustain the untruth that it is not Dravidian.

“It has often been suggested that this was the civilization of the Saraswati river, not the Indus. Vedic literature gives importance to a river known as the Saraswati which it said, flowed from north east towards the lower Indus Valley through what are now provinces of Haryana, North Rajasthan and Bahawalpur, and is identified by the mostly dry river bed that is known as Ghagger in India and further downstream in Pakistan, as the Hakra. It has been said that there are several relic mounds of the period (khalibangan for example) spread along the banks of the Saraswathi river system, more sites than the alluvial valley of the Indus. Thus it has been claimed that what we have here is saraswathi rather than Indus civilization”

This is the argument put forth by those who want to name it as Saraswathi civilization. Shareen Rat agar points out the difficulties in accepting this hypothesis. “First fewer Harappan sites lie along the banks of Ghaggar-Hakra than is made out. Second there is no proof at all that the mighty sarasvati of the Rig-Veda was in fact this (now dry) river- the identification is itself open to doubt. Third when active the Ghaggar-Hakra was in any case a tributary to the Indus. Last, the term Saraswati conjures up a kind of identity between the culture reflected in the Vedic literature and that excavated at harappan sites when, in fact there is hardly any correspondence. The label Saraswathi for all reasons, is difficult to defend on scholarly grounds “(p7 Understanding Harappa Civilization in the Greater Indus Valley)

Irfan habib says, “The Indus basin includes the area along the Saraswathi, a small seasonal river, so that coupling of saraswathi with the Indus (Sind) has no geographical justification”

Dr.R.Madhivanan says that his researches in Rajasthan and Gujarat revealed that the local people refer the dead and missing river as “Quari kanya “. Quari became Gowri in Sanskrit and in Punjabi the word Gaur added as suffix, are all derived from Kumari, and the Tamil settlers not forgetting their origin had named this river as Kumari Kanya, after Kanya kumari, and thereby the so called Saraswathi river’s name is Kanya Kumari river named from Tamil sources.. He also says in Saurashtra, the Tamil settlers have named another river as Kaveri. He also says that if at all a mythical river Saraswathi had existed it flowed only in Afghanistan and not in India. The dreams of those who want to change the name of Indus into Saraswathi will receive the quake like hit and be smashed beyond redemption, putting an end to their futile exercise in renaming a globally known civilization.

Well apart from archaeology in land now a new research is being made out in underwater archaeology. The National Institute of Ocean Technology, Chennai, last year unknowingly photographed the ruins of a vast ancient city submerged 40 m under the sea, while they took sonar photographs of the ocean floor. More dredging of the site brought out roughly 2000 artifacts, which were examined by the Birbal Shani Institute of Pale botany in Lucknow and National Geographic Research

Institute in Hyderabad. BSIP dated all the artifacts to be around 5500 BC and NGRI pushed the date back to 7500 BC. This discovery must have woken up the Dravidian people, especially the Tamils whose literary evidences prove that the origins of Tamils lay in Kumarikandam, the lost continent in the Indian Ocean. If lost cities could be found in Gulf of Cambay off the Gujarat coast, why not we search for the lost continent of Kumarikandam, the homeland of the Dravidians? In Bangalore an exhibition of the artifacts found from Gulf of Cambay and our Poompuhar were displayed. Video pictures taken in underwater were shown, and to our delight the scientist Graham Cook said that Poompuhar had been submerged before 9500 years, thus even prior to Gulf of Cambay, our Poompuhar had a civilization dating back to 9500 years. These discoveries, which had taken place last year, are of great importance in our Review of the Recent Discoveries on Indus Civilization. Indus valley is only the catacomb of the Dravidian civilization as the destruction spoken in rigvedic hymns are to be believed. Instead the cradle of the Dravidian civilization is in Kumari kandam, otherwise called as Lemurian continent and Gondwana land.

Now that leads us to a multi pronged research approach. Because quest towards truth is a must. In a show in the National Geographical Channel titled the Journey of Man an answer was given, which gives us light on the direction to be pursued. "So far our way of investigating our ancestry has been to dig up ancient civilizations. Yet bones do not answer the question of evolution, but genes do," said

scientist Spencer Wells. “So we started mapping of a family tree of the entire planet taking blood samples from every part of the world. We worked backwards, through elimination and matching, and found that it was a strain of the Y-chromosome that was most common across the planet. Every person on earth is part of a connected family, scientists say with certainty, delivering blow to those who claim superiority by race and birth. The mapping of International Rice Genome Sequencing project follows mapping of human genes. In such scientific quests, interesting information trickles down. The estimated gene in a human being lies between 30,000 to 40,000 whereas Indica rice contains 45,000 to 56,000 genes. Japonica Rice contains 63,000 genes. Man and mouse are cousins, each descended from a small mammal that split into species towards the end of dinosaur era. Despite 75 million years of separate evolution only about 300 genes, 1 % of the 30,000 possessed by the mouse have no obvious counterpart in the human genome, says Nature Magazine. Taking the cue from these scientific quests, I feel that there is a strong necessity for mapping all the worlds’ languages. Of course UNESCO had brought out Atlases and strives hard to redeem endangered languages. 18 countries made an attempt together in a Universal Network Language project, aimed at using computers to demolish the Tower of Babel. The purpose behind this project is of course trade promotion by way of making translations easy and faster. But I feel that to understand the etymology of every word spoken in every language living or dead a global attempt should be made by UNESCO or the Universities

of the nations in partnership to harness their common knowledge to track down the etymology of every word spoken. It is quest undertaken by the Greatest Tamilian of the past century Devaneyya Paavanar and his approach needs scientific sanction and pooling of the worlds knowledge to arrive at the cultural and linguistic roots including the Primitive language of the Mankind.

Already scientists are engaged in the quest and had succeeded initially. Mr.Wolfgang Enand of Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany in the Nature Magazine dated 14 th August 2002 states proudly that “First language gene is discovered. Scientists think they have found the first of the many genes that gave humans speech. Without it language and human culture may never have developed. Key changes to a gene in the last 2, 00,000 years of human evolution appear to be the driving force. The gene FOXP2 was first definitely linked with human knowledge.” Having found the first gene that gave humans speech, the quest towards tracing the first language spoken by man had gained impetus. Meanwhile treading the path laid down by Deveneya Paavanar, Dr.R.Mathivanan opines that a new approach called language archaeology ,be used to trace the roots of various words spoken in various languages which have common root from the Primitive language.

Dr. Robert Caldwell’s Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages published in 1856 is still hailed as a remarkable turning point in tracing the glorious past, yet even after so

many decades, no serious attempt is being made to update this with all the information we have, extending to all the languages of the Dravidian family, including ones spoken in Pakistan and Northern India. Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture, International school of Dravidian Linguistics at Thiruvananthapuram, Dravidian University at Kuppam in Andhra Pradesh and International Institute of Tamil studies at Chennai must join hands to produce an updated Grammar on Dravidian Linguistics, which must cover other Dravidian family of languages spread all over the world. This will be of great help in establishing the claim of Tamil as the primary classical language.

The Tamil epic Silapathigaram provides us with the literary evidence about the deluge that washed away a landmass in the Indian Ocean. Mr. James Churchward by studying various ancient texts, it is claimed, had discovered the existence of a long lost continent with an advanced civilization that 60,000 years ago had sunk below the Pacific Ocean after a cataclysmic earthquake. There were 64 million people who died in the sinking, and that is dated back over 50,000 years. The Hawaiian Islands and the Pacific islands are the remaining mountain peaks of the lost continent. Well if Mr. James Churchward's literary evidence cannot be brushed aside, we cannot also brush aside the Silapathikaram couplet. If a detailed study is conducted in Hawaii and Pacific islands perhaps we may be able to know about the lost continent, the homeland of Tamils. Lemuria is otherwise called Pacifica or Mu. James Churchward in his book "The Lost

continent of Mu” maintains that” vast knowledge of science, ancient art and history, mythology and occult” existed in the lost continent of Lemuria. “The garden of Eden was not in Asia but now on a sunken continent in the Pacific ocean,” he proclaims and adds “The biblical story of Creation came first not from the peoples of Nile or the Euraphrates valley but from this now submerged continent, Mu- Motherland of Man. Please note that it is being called Motherland and not Fatherland, as is usual with the cultural eliminators opposed to Dravidian viewpoints. In his book “The Children of Mu” this scholar says, “Sixty three million people lived on the now lost continent of Mu. Over 2, 00,000 years ago.

The children of Mu became the first influential people on earth.... America was one of the first colonies of Mu... Mu had an incredibly sophisticate government, flowering of culture and scientific technology.” Much of the Lemurian civilization lived in homes with transparent roofs. They were free from stress and disease lived to be hundreds of years old, developing their E.S.P abilities through nearly 40,000 years of societal practice and experimentation. With that many centuries of evolution, Lemurians gained their reputation or telepathy, astral travel and teleportation-making land vehicles unnecessary. They were primarily socially a vegetarian, agricultural, outdoor, organic culture that worked in harmony with nature and the land, having little use for scientific technology.”

It is to be noted that we always take it as a gospel, when it comes from the white man’s

mouth. But we realize little that scholars like Devaneyya Paavaanar are not among those who have lost their mental equilibrium nor they are nincompoops, but they are treasure troves of knowledge, which a common good is delivered to Tamil people. Speaking about Lemurian Tamils Paavaanar will trace the development of Tamil between 100,000 and 50,000 BC. Spencer Wells and his team of scientists have now found out that the first man originated before 60,000 years. We Tamils somehow have become addicted to the use of the phrase Two Thousand years old to claim a hoary past for our culture. Christian calendar alone cannot be the period of inception of the Dravidian culture. Millions of years ago what happened, we have to indulge in a quest, and not be satisfied with the accidental unearthing of the Indus Valley Civilization.

From Australia to Arizona there exists a mythological proof of the lost continent. To quote from a Hopi legend 'down on the bottom of the seas lay all the proud cities and the worldly treasures corrupted with evil. Faced with such disaster, some people hid inside the earth while the others escaped by crossing the ocean on reed rafts, using the islands as stepping-stones. The same story to escape to dry land appears in the Popul Vu epic of the Quiche Maya and the Modoc tribe near Mount Shasta among others.

"According to the Rosicrucian's of San Jose, California, the disastrous cycle began with volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and the collapse of the subterranean gas belts. Magnetic waves started moving around the

globe, and Lemuria began to go under. Fortunately there was time enough for small groups to salvage part of Lemurias precious wisdom, which was stored in crystals. Some colonists reached India and from there Mesopotamia and Egypt, while others migrated eastwards on crude rafts to the Americas, forming the racial core of the earliest Indian tribes.

So it is not Silapathigaram alone, the stories of various tribes speak about the lost continent, and it is here, in the Indian Ocean south of Kanyakumari the National institute of Oceanography must engage in underwater archaeological quest to find out the cradle of the Dravidian civilization that spread from South to North encompassing the Indus valley and countries beyond.

The Super Continent of Gondwanaland was made up of South America, Africa, Antarctica, India and Australia.” Gondwanaland is named after the upper Paleozoic and Mesozoic formations of the Gondwanaland district of central India. which display a number of shared geologic features (The Gondwana Beds). In the late nineteenth century, on the basis of comparative geological evidence, the Austrian geologist, Edward Stress suggested that the continents of Africa, South America, Australia and India were once part of a single super continent, which he called Gondwanaland.”

Alfred Wagener, known as the father of the theory of Continental drift, in his publication around 1912 said that “ looking at the global map it would appear that the continents could

be brought together to fit like a jigsaw puzzle” Now everyone admits that the solid upper earth floats on asthenosphere, the lithosphere slips.

“The vast Himalayan range was created when a plate of the earth crust carrying the landmass of India collided with the plate carrying Asia some 45 million years ago having traveled 5000 kilometers nearly due north across the expanse now occupied by the Indian ocean’ opines D.P.Meckinzie and J, G.Sclater in their article “ The evolution of the Indian Ocean’. Apart from the literary evidences, when we look forward to understand the evolution of Dravidian civilization we will have to get answers over the puzzle about the Indian Ocean, wherein the cradle of the Dravidian civilizations remains buried.

Scholars say that” Many attempts have been made to guess precisely how south America, Africa, India, Antarctica and Australia were once joined to form the primitive continent known as Gondwanaland. There is as yet no general agreement as to how this should be done. The rift between Australia and Antarctica is good. The arrangement of all five major units however is controversial and the original position of Madagascar is unknown. The principal difficulty is that no magnetic lineation has yet been discovered on the older parts of the floor of the Indian Ocean between the continents. We therefore cannot continue to reassemble continents by the same methods we have used to trace the movement of India. During the past 75 million years. There is also no other structure like the Ninety

East Ridge which was recognized as a transform fault even before the magnetic lineation were mapped. Fortunately, the area of the sea floor in which the record presumably lies hidden is not great. Last year a series of deep holes were drilled in the floor of the Indian Ocean by the drilling vessel” Glomar Challenger. The data from these holes have confirmed and amplified our reconstruction of the history of the ocean. They have also added to the evidence needed to reconstruct Gondwanaland”

“Meanwhile one can speculate about the original juxtapositions of India, Antarctica and Australia. One guess is that existing reconstructions are wrong because they have attempted to remove practically every piece of the ocean floor between the continents. That approach has been favoured because all continents believed to have formed the Gondwanaland show evidence of having been covered by a huge ice cap 270 million years ago. We know from recent glaciations in the Northern hemisphere that continental ice caps can simultaneously cover landmasses that are separated by oceans. It may be that a small ocean basin comparable perhaps to the arctic Ocean, was nestled somewhere among the southern landmass 270 million years ago. It may be out of our ignorance of its existence and shape that is preventing the successful reconstruction of Gondwanaland “This is how the Indian Ocean puzzle remains according to D.P.Meckenzie and J.G.Slater. And it is the duty of our government as well of nations that border within Indian Ocean must indulge in a joint search for answers to these puzzles. Unless the submerged Kumari Kandam is

subjected to in depth study, it will be impossible to back up our literary evidences with scientific proofs, and the National Institute of Oceanography must be engaged to unravel these facts. While excavating Arikamedu, all efforts to look into the ocean floor near Pondicherry for further evidences is a must.

And let the quest to find the cradle of mankind as well as our homeland begins. Truth is awaiting us and we must march towards truth and in pursuance of truth all efforts must be made by Tamils all over the world apart from fighting falsehoods spread day in and day out, against Dravidian culture.

NAGAS ARE DRAVIDIANS

N.Nandhivarman

The Nagaland struggle is based on few beliefs. “The Nagas who inhabit the land of Nagaland are a different race who had been occupying their land from time immemorial.

Prior to 1947 Indian subcontinent was a group of over 560 princely states ruled by various Maharajas or Kings. When the Maharaja or King of such state fell the whole state became a conquered territory. For that matter Maratha Empire or any other princely states could be considered as legitimate Indian Territory after 1947 not just because they voluntarily conceded to be a party to the Indian Republic of 1947.

The British on the eve of their departure from India toyed with the idea of setting up a crown colony comprising all the eastern peoples of the North Eastern region who were either Burmese or Indian. The Coupland plan would have created a crown colony with an area of 1,50,000 square miles comprising Nagas, Karens, Kachins, Shans, Chins, Mons, and even Mizos, Khasis and Assamese people. Such was the ground reality in Naga areas whereas India had to face 562 princely states.

The then Foreign Secretary of India K.P.S. Menon described the situation of India on the pre-independence years “When the British left India, the unity of even divided India was in danger. Some 560 princely states had been left in the air. It was open to them to

adhere to India, to accede to Pakistan or to remain independent.... It almost looked as if India was going to be Balkanized. But this danger was averted by the firm handling of the Princes by the man of Iron, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. “

Close on the heels of British Prime Minister Atlee's policy announcement of February 20 1947, Her Majesty's Government decision to withdraw from India by June 1948, The Times of London wrote “ Muslim separatism is deriving encouragement from the language of the White Paper. The Princes too drew similar encouragement. Under the inspiration of the Political department, they began thinking in terms of Third Dominion, which Churchill called Princistan. The Chamber of Princes moved in that direction. The Nawab of Bhopal, who was the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, asked the Princes of the chamber to adopt wait and see policy and not to join India Constituent assembly.”

Sir Conrad Corfield, the Secretary of the Political Department seemed to be toying with the idea of using the Princes as Third Force. The Third Dominion dream suffered the setback when British Government denial of states membership in the Commonwealth. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel got a shot in his arm with the Prime Minister of Bikaner K.M.Panikkar conveying on March 10 th the Bikaner Maharaja's decisions to participate without delay in the proceedings of the Indian Constituent Assembly. The banner of revolt unfurled by Travancore particularly by its Diwan Sir C.P.Ramasamy Iyer on May 9 th of 1947 claimed that on the lapse of

paramountcy on August 15 simultaneously with transfer of power to India, Travancore would declare herself a free and independent state. Sardar Patel took up the matter directly with the Maharaja of Travancore and in commanding voice threatened as to who is putting roadblocks, which made the Maharaja declare his decision to accede to India.

To illustrate the case how many princely states fell for Indian Union, let us take the example of Bastar, now a district in Madhya Pradesh of India. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel chanced to come across an official file. It narrated how Bastar, who's Raja was a minor and weakling and the Prime Minister a foreigner was mortgaged to Hyderabad state for long lease. Patel called the King of Bastar, and he observed "I saw the ruler. How young and inexperienced he was. I felt it was a sin to make him sign such an agreement. It was then that I was made fully conscious of the extent to which our interests were being prejudiced in every way by the mechanizations of the Political Department, and came to the conclusion that sooner we rid of these people, the better. Their main aim was to further their own interests and to cause as much damage to India as possible. I came to the conclusion that the best course was to drive out the foreigners even at the cost of partition of the country. It was also then that I felt that there was only one way to take the country safe and strong, and that was unification of India."

It is a great achievement, particularly of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who took less than two and half years for the integration of princely states in Indian Union. The Indian

bureaucracy did not match him can be proven by citing one example of their failure to resolve a thorny issue between Bangladesh and Indian Union, in spite of the euphoria over India aiding the creation of Bangladesh. "The rulers of Koch Bihar and Rangpur within the Old Bengal Presidency lost their territories to each other playing the gambling by cards. There are till date 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and 51 Bangladesh enclaves within India, as a result of this gamble by 2 princely states.' Yet no one had the moral courage of Sardar Patel to resolve even this issue which every government keeps in cold storage. The border dispute and Kashmir dispute, why even the Nagaland issue evades a settlement, and we are not supposed to blame anyone in our democracy.

The emergence of every nation has its own stories which had not seen the light of history. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru in page 224 of his book *The Glimpses of World History* narrates the story of China integrating into a nation.

:" The administration of Mongol empire must have been a very difficult task. It is not surprising therefore that it began to split. Kublai Khan died in 1292. After him there was no great Khan. The Empire divided up into big areas.

The Empire of China including Mongolia, Manchuria and Tibet. This empire was the principled one under Kublai Khan's descendent of the Yuan dynasty.

To the far west of Russia, Poland and Hungary was the Empire of the Golden Horde as the Mongols were then called.

In Persia and Mesopotamia and part of Central Asia there was a great Turkey as it was called, the Empire of Zagatai.

Between the Mongolia and Golden Horde there was the Siberian Empire of the Mongols.

Mongol Empire was split up each of these five divisions it was a mighty empire.”

This is the story of Mongol empire, its later day disintegration and again unification as China in the age of nationalism. The Indian sub continent was ruled by Tamils, their Empires disintegrated, deluge and other natural calamities struck at the Tamil land. Later in British period on their eve of departure there were 11 Presidencies and 562 princely states, which when the winds of nationalism blew over Indian sub constituent were welded together as Indian Union under a Constitution of India. The problems left over by colonialism, be it border dispute with China or Kashmir still bleeds India.

To the readers, the statement Tamils ruled India would at the outset appear a tall and false claim. If I could present facts quoting the Father of Indian Constitution Dr.B.R. Ambedkar such doubts will be laid to rest. It would also establish the Tamil as mother tongue of Nagas, who are Dravidians. Let us look at the conclusions Dr.B.R.Ambedkar had reached in his scientific enquiry.

“It is thus clear that the Nagas and Dravidians are one and the same people. Even with much proof, people may not be found ready to accept this thesis. The chief difficulty in the way of accepting it lies in the designation of the people of South India by the name Dravidian. It is natural for them to ask why the term Dravidian has come to be restricted to the people of South India if they are really Nagas. Critics are bound to ask: If the Dravidians and Nagas are the same people, why the name Nagas not used to designate people of South India also. This is no doubt a puzzle. But it is a puzzle which is not beyond solution. It can be solved if certain facts are borne in mind. The first thing to be borne in mind is the situation regarding language. Today the language of Southern India differs from that of the people of North India.”

“The second thing to be borne into mind is that the word Dravida is not an original word. It is the Sanskritized form of the word Tamil. The original word Tamil when imported into Sanskrit became Damita and later on Damila became Dravida. The word Dravida is the name of the language of the people and does not denote the race of the people.

The third thing to remember is that Tamil or Dravida was not merely the language of South India but before the Aryans came it was the language of the whole of India and was spoken from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. In fact it was the language of the Nagas throughout India.

The next thing to note is the contact between Aryan and the Nagas and the effect it produced on Nagas and their language.

Strange as it may appear the effect of this contact on the Nagas of North India was quite different from the effect it produced on the Nagas of South India. The Nagas in North India gave up Tamil which was their mother tongue and adopted Sanskrit in its place. The Nagas in South India retained Tamil as their mother tongue and did not adopt the Sanskrit language of the Aryans.

If this difference is borne in mind it will help to explain why the name Dravida came to be applied only for the people of South India. The necessity for the application of the name Dravida to the Nagas of North India had ceased because they had ceased to speak the Dravida Language. The special application of the use of the word Dravida for the people of South India must not therefore obscure the fact that the Nagas and Dravidas are one and the same people. They are only two different names for the same people. Nagas was a racial or cultural name and Dravida was their linguistic name” concluded Dr.B.R.Ambedkar.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar had tried to explain these questions “We often come across four names Dravidians, Dasas, Nagas and Aryans. What do these names indicate? These questions have never been considered. Are these names Aryans, Dravidians, Dasas, and Nagas the names of different races or are they merely different names for a people of same race?

“The general assumption is that they are different names. It is an assumption on which theories like that of Mr. Rice, which seek to explain the social structure of the Hindu Society, particularly its class basis, are built.

Before such a theory is accepted it is necessary to examine its foundations. Starting with the Aryans it is beyond dispute that they were not a single homogeneous people. They were divided into two sections is beyond dispute. One of them may be called Rig Vedic Aryans and the other Atharva Vedic Aryans. Their cultural cleavage appears to be complete. The Rig Vedic Aryans believed in Yajna. The Atharva Vedic Aryans believed the Magis. Their mythologies were different, The Rig Vedic Aryans believed in Deluge and the creation of their race from Manu. The Atharva Vedic Aryans did not believe in Deluge but believed in the creation of their race from Brahma or Prajapathi. Their literary developments also lay along different paths. The Rig Vedic Aryans produced Brahmanas, Sutras and Aranyakas. The Atharvavedic Aryans produced the Upanishads. Their cultural conflict was so great that the Rig Vedic Aryans would not for long time admit the sanctity of the Atharvaveda nor of the Upanishads and when they did recognize it did they call it Vedanta. Vedanta which contrary to the current meaning of the word namely essence of Vedanta originally meant something outside the boundary of Vedas and therefore, not as sacred as the Vedas. Whether these two sections of Aryans were two different races we do not know. We do not know whether the word Aryan is indicative of race. Historians therefore made a mistake in proceeding on the assumption that the Aryans were a separate race.”

“A greater mistake lies in differentiating the Dasas from the Nagas. The Dasas are same as Nagas. Dasas is merely another name for

Nagas. It is not difficult to understand how the Nagas came to be called Dasas in Vedic literature. Dasa is Sanskritized form of the Indo-Iranian word Dahaka. Dahaka was the name of the King of the Nagas.

{The detailed inputs with regards to this are in the Paper presented by Miss Karunakara Gupta to the Third Session of Indian History Congress -1939 titled Nagas and Naga Cult in Ancient Indian History.]

“Consequently the Aryans called the Nagas after the name of their king Dahaka, which in Sanskrit form became Dasa a generic name applied to all the Nagas”, says Dr.B.R.Ambedkar in his book The Untouchables. Having arrived to the scene where Nagas are also known as Dasa, we are wondering whether the names Bharathidasan, Kannadasan, Ramadasan, Vanidasan etc wherever the surname was used as Dasa has more inner meaning than what could be read at the outset. Such similarities apart we have plenty of places within India called Nagapattinam, Nagore, and Nagpur and so on proving the all India spread of Nagas.

Let us first finish the detailed analysis of the Father of Indian Constitution Dr.B.R.Ambedkar before dealing many such similarities.

“Who were the Nagas? Undoubtedly they were Non_Aryans. A careful study of Vedic literature reveals a spirit of conflict, of a dualism, and a race for superiority between two distinct types of culture and thought. In the Rig-Veda, we are first introduced to the

Snake God in the form of Ahi Vitra, the enemy of the Aryan God Indra. Naga, the name under which the snake-god was to become so famous in later days, does not appear in early Vedic literature. Even when it does for the first time in Sathapatha Brahmana [XI.2, 7, 12] it is not clear whether a great snake or a great elephant is meant. But this does not conceal the nature of Ahi Vitra, since he is described always in Rig-Veda as the serpent who lay around or hidden in waters, and is holding a full control over the waters of heaven and earthlike.”

“It is also evident from the hymns that refer to Ahi Vitra, that he received no worship from the Aryan tribes and was only regarded as an evil spirit of considerable power who must be fought down.” So goes on Dr.Ambedkar.

It is becoming evident that Snake cult as seen in the snake around the neck of Lord Shiva or in the snake bed floating in the ocean of milk where Lord Vishnu is holidaying, is not an Aryan element but a Non-Aryan element. In every temple near the trees, people worship the Snake God. Because to segregate these worship forms from the worship forms of Aryans is highly laborious and impossible job, Periyar E,V.Ramasamy wanted to throw all gods and goddesses into the dustbin of past.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar’s narration of Naga history follows: “The mention of Naga in Rig-Veda shows that the Nagas were ancient people. It must also be remembered that the Nagas in no way an aboriginal or uncivilized people. History shows very close intermarriage between the Naga people and Royal families of

India. The Devanagari record of Kadamba King Krishnavarman connects the beginning of the Kadambakula with Nagas. The Royakota grant of 9 th century A.D mentions the marriage of Asvathama with a Nagi and the foundation of the Pallava line by Skandasishya, the issue of this marriage.

Virakurcha, who according to another Pallava inscription dated in the 9 th century A.D was the ruler of the dynasty, is also mentioned in the same inscription as having married a Nagi and obtained from her the insignia of royalty. The marriage of Gautamiputra, the son of the Vakataka King Pravarsena with the daughter of Bharasiva King Bhava Naga, is a historical fact. So is the marriage of Chandragupta II with Princess Kuvera Naga of Naga kula. A Tamil poet asserts that Kokkilli, an early Chozha king had married a Naga princess. Rajendra Chozha is also credited to have won by his radiant beauty the hand of the noble daughter of Naga race. The Navasahasanka Charita describes the marriage of the Paramara king Sindhuraja, who seems to have reigned towards the early part of the 10 th century A.D, with Naga princess Sasiprabha, with such exhaustive details in so matter of fact manner as to make us almost feel certain that there must have been some historical basis for this assertion. From the Harsha inscription of V.S.1030-973 A.D we know that Guvaka I, who is the sixth king in the genealogy upwards from Vighraharaja Chahamana and thus might be supposed to have been ruling towards the middle of 9 th century was famous as hero in the assemblies of the Nagas and other princes. Santikara of the Bhaumn dynasty of Orissa, one of whose

dates was most probably 921 A.D is mentioned in an inscription of his son as having married Thirubuvana Mahadevi of the Naga family. Not only did Naga people occupy a high cultural level but history shows that they ruled a good part of India. That Maharashtra is the home of Nagas goes without saying. Its people and its kings were Nagas.”

This and more evidences produced by the scholarly presentation of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar will run into pages and make this paper into a book

Mr.Dikshithar in his paper South India in Ramayana says “The Nagas, another tribe in semi divine character with their totems as serpent spread throughout India from Taksasila in the North West to Assam in the North East and to Ceylon and South India in the South. At one time they must have been powerful. Contemporaneous with the Yakwas or perhaps subsequent to their fall as political entity, the Nagas rose to prominence in South India. Not only parts of Ceylon but ancient Malabar were the territories occupied by the Nagas..... In The Thamizh classics of early centuries after Christ, we hear frequent references to Naganadu..... Remnants of Naga worship still lingering in Malabar and the temple in Nagerkoil in South Travancore is dedicated to Naga worship even today. All that can be said about them is that they were a sea faring tribe. Their womenfolk were renowned for their beauty. Apparently Nagas had become merged with the Cheras who rose to power and prominence at the commencement of Christian era.

Mr.C.F.Oldham in The Sun and Serpent states:

“The Dravidian people have been divided from ancient times into Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. Chera or Sera [in old Tamizh sarai] is the Dravidian equivalent for Naga. Cheramandala, Nagadwipa or the Naga country. This seems to point distinctly to the Asura origin of the Dravidians of South. But in addition to this there still exists, widely spread over the Ganges valley, a people who call themselves Cherus or Seoris, who claim descent from serpent gods. The Cherus are of very ancient race, they are believed to have once held a great portion of the valley of Ganges, which as we have already seen, was occupied in very early times by Naga tribes. The Cherus appear to have been gradually ousted from their lands, during the troubled times of the Mohammedan invasions, and they are now poor and almost landless. There can be little doubt that these people are kinsmen of the Dravidian Cheras.

The Cherus have several peculiar customs and amongst them one which seems to connect them with the Lichhavis, as well as with the Newars of Nepal. This is the election of a raja for every five or six houses, and his investiture, in due form, with the tilak or royal frontal mark. Both Lichavis and Newars had many customs in common with the Dravidians of the South. Each venerated the serpent. Karkota Naga being to Nepal what Nila Naga was to Kashmir. A Naga too, was the tutelary deity of Vaishali, the Lichchavi capital. The martial relations of Newars and Lichavis

closely resembled those of Tamil people and go far to show a common origin.

Property amongst Newars descended in the female line, as it once did amongst the Arattas, Bahikas or Takhas of the Punjab, whose sister's sons, and not their own, were their heirs. This is still a Dravidian custom. In short, a recent Dravidian writer Mr. Balakrishna Nayar says that his people appear to be in nearly every particular, the kinsfolk of the Newars. Besides all this, however, there are other links connecting the Naga people of the South with those of the North of India. In an inscription discovered by Colonel Tod at Kanswah near the river Chambal, a Raja, Called Salindra of the race of Sarya, a tribe renowned amongst the tribes of the mighty is said to be the ruler of Takhya. This was evidently the Takhya kingdom of the Punjab which was visited by Hiou-en-tsiang. It seems Naga people of Takhya were known also by the name Sarya. Again in the outer Himalayas between Sutlej and Beas valleys, is a tract of country called Sara or Seoraj. In this district the Naga demigods are the chief deities worshipped. There is another Seoraj in the upper Chinab valley, and this is too occupied by a Naga worshipping people.

The name Saraj or Seoraj appears to be same as the Sarya of Colonel Tod's inscription and as Seori, which is the alternative name of the Cherus of the Ganges valley. It seems to be identical with Sarai, which we have already seen, is the old name for the Chera or Naga. Apparently therefore the Saryas or Takhya, the Saraj people of the Sutlej valley, the Seoris or Cherus of the valley of Ganges, and the

Cheras, Seras or Keralas of Southern India, are but different branches of the same Naga worshipping people.

It may be noted that in some Himalayan dialects, Kira or Kiri means serpent. This name from which was perhaps derived the term Kirate so often applied to the people of Himalayas. is found in Rajatarangani, where it is applied to a people in or near Kashmir. The Kiras are mentioned by Viraha Mihira in the copper plate published by Professor Keilhorn.

An inscription at the Baijnath Temple in the Kangra Valley gives Kiragrams as the then name of the place. This in local dialect would mean the village of serpents. The Naga is still a popular deity at Baijnath and throughout the neighboring country. The term Kira is thus an equivalent for Naga and it can be scarcely doubted that serpent worshipping Kiras of the Himalaya were closely related to the Dravidian Kera, Cheras, or Kerals of South. Similarity of name is not always to be trusted, but here we have something more. These people, whose designation is thus apparently the same, are all of solar race, they are all venerating the hooded serpent, and they all worship, as ancestors, the Naga demigods.

From the foregoing it would seem tolerably certain that the Dravidian of Southern India were of the same stock as the Nagas or Asuras of the North."

So far we had dealt extensively quoting lengthy passages from Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and from the sources he relied upon to arrive at a new fact. It is been a difficult task to match

the genius who had logically presented his views arguing like an effective lawyer of history. Hence instead of quoting few lines, the necessity arose to quote pages.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar is a genius who had dealt in depth about the racial question that dominates Indian history, society and political space. In his collected works Volume 7 Ambedkar wrote about the Shudra history quoting extensively from Vedic texts.

He says “The Aryan race theory is so absurd that it ought to have been dead long ago. But far from being dead the theory has a considerable hold upon the people. There are two explanations which account for this phenomenon. The first explanation is to be found in the support which this theory receives from the Brahmin scholars. This is very strange phenomenon. As Hindus, they should ordinarily show a dislike for the Aryan theory with its express avowal of the superiority of the European races over the Asiatic races. But the Brahmin scholar has not only no such aversion but he most willingly hails it. The reasons are obvious. The Brahmin believes in the two nation theory. He claims to be the representative of the Aryan race and he regards the rest of Hindus as descendents of non-Aryans. The theory helps him to establish his kinship with the European races and share their arrogance and superiority. He likes particularly that part of the theory which makes the Aryan an invader and a conqueror of non-Aryan races. For it helps him to maintain and justify his over lordship over the non-Brahmins.” [Page 80 Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and

Speeches published by Education Department of Government of Maharashtra in 1990]

It has become imperative to deal the Aryan theory first before we arrive at the Dravidian or Naga racial theories. The new light shed by Dr.Ambedkar will be of immense help to understand the racial question and the subsequent racial conflict that dominates Indian minds for some centuries.

“The second explanation why the Aryan race theory is not dead is because of the general insistence by European scholars that the word varna means color and acceptance of the view by a majority of Brahmin scholars. Indeed this is the mainstay of the Aryan theory. There is no doubt that as long as this interpretation of the varna continues to be accepted, the Aryan theory will continue to live “wrote Ambedkar on 10 th October 1946.

That is in Indian context. Till date the mindset had not changed even in times when scientists debate whether there is a genetic basis for race. Scientists say it is nothing more than political prejudice, and let us examine the ground reality.

“The genetic basis of race ad the superiority of one of them over the other died a sudden death during the 1936 Aryan Supremacy Olympics in Berlin. That was when Jesse Owens, a black United States athlete, exploded in the track and field events. He won four gold medals and broke number of world records simultaneously. Hitler refused to shake hands with him and instead stormed out of the stadium in disgust at the star’s

triumph over his much hyped Nordic Caucasian team. This reopened the most disastrous chapter of the modern 20 th century eugenic movement. It also led to the renewed politicization of race. It was subsequently used by the Nazis in the thirties and forties to justify genocide. It was the rationale for the holocaust and whole sale extermination of Jews, gypsies and other so called disease carrying low IQ, morally bankrupt ethnic groups solely on the basis of fundamental genetic inequality. There was never and still is not a single shred of evidence for dividing a species from one ancient African mitochondrial DNA into superior or inferior races” wrote The Times of India, leading English daily in its Mumbai edition’s editorial dated 1st November 2004.

The color prejudice myth must have to be exposed. Professor Ripley in his book *Races of Europe* [page 466] asserts that earliest Europeans were of dark complexion. “We are strengthened in this assumption that the earliest Europeans were not only long headed but also dark complexioned, by various points of enquiry thus far. Judged therefore either in the light of general principles or of local details, it would seem as if the earliest race in Europe must have been very dark. “

It is a matter of concern how color prejudice created castes in India though nowhere in the world such a cruel system of suppression exists, that too with religious sanction. The word religion itself is derived from Latin word *religare*, which meant bundle of beliefs. Among the bundle of such beliefs, the caste

prejudice inculcated in Indian minds is mental slavery that rules the roost till date.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar says “ Turning to the Vedas for any indication whether the Aryans had any color prejudice, in Rig Veda i.117.8 there is a reference to Ashvins having brought about the marriage between Shyavya and Rushati. Shyavya is black and Rushati is fair.

In Rig Veda i.117.5 there is a prayer addressed to Ashvins for having saved Vandana who is spoken as of golden color. In Rig Veda ii.3.9 there is a prayer by an Aryan invoking the Devas to bless him with a son with certain virtues but of [pishanga] tawny [reddish brown] complexion.

These incidents, Ambedkar say shows that the Vedic Aryans had no color prejudice. How could they have? The Vedic Aryans were not of one color. Their complexion varied, some were of copper complexion, some white and some black. Rama, the son of Dasaratha has been described as Shyama i.e. dark in complexion, so is Krishna the descendent of Yadus, another Arya clan. The Rishi Dirghatamas who is the author of many mantras in Rig Veda must have been dark in complexion. Kanva is an Aryan rishi of great repute. But according to the description given in Rig Veda x.31.11 he was of dark color.

“To take up the meaning of the word Varna, and to see in what sense it is used in Rig-Veda, Ambedkar does a word count of all hymns of Rig-Veda. The word Varna is used in Rig Veda in 22 places. Of these in about 17 places the word is used in reference to deities

such as Ushas, Agni, Soma etc, and means luster, features or color. Being used in connection with deities, it would be unsafe to use them for ascertaining what meaning the word Varna had in Rigveda when applied to human beings. There are four and at the most five places in the Rig-Veda where the word is used in reference to human beings. Having dealt the word extensively and intensively in Rig-veda Dr.Ambedkar traces the word in Indo-Iranian literature. He says the word Varana or Varena in Zend Avesta used in the sense of faith, religious doctrine, choice or creed or belief.'

This evidence from Zend Avesta, Dr.Ambedkar opines as to the meaning of the word Varna leaves no doubt that it originally meant a class holding to a particular faith and it had nothing to do with color or complexion. Then Dr.Ambedkar summarizes his findings by saying that the Vedas do not know any such race as the Aryan race. He further adds that there is no evidence in the Vedas of any invasion of India by the Aryan race and its having conquered the Dasas and Dasyus supposed to be natives of India. There is no evidence to show the distinction between Aryans, Dasas, and Dasyus was a racial distinction. The Vedas do not support the contention that the Aryans were different in color from the Dasas and Dasyus.

It would need a lengthy argument to say that all humans are one, and all human beings have a common gene called sangene in them. We have to quote extensively from the book Journey of Man by Spencer Wells to prove that first human beings originated in Africa and

they are black. Instead we will quote a report in The Hindu; a daily dated December 14 Saturday 2002. There is bad news for those who have notions of racial or intellectual superiority. New genetic evidence collected from across the globe shatters the myths and adds a body of proof to the hypothesis that all people are descended from a single man in Africa, who lived approximately 60,000 years ago. Tune in to National Geographic Channel on TV on Sunday at 9.P.M, and come face to face with evidence gathered by geneticist Spenser Wells and her collaborators including R.M.Pitchaiappan of Madurai Kamaraj University.

The fascinating Journey of Man from Africa to Central Asia, and thereon to Asia, Australia besides separate moves westward to Europe and beyond is all documented in a two hour special. Genetics has a way of mapping biological reality and as Dr.Wells and her fellow scientists studied in places as varied as Artic to the Australian aborigines, they found stunning evidence unraveled by genetic markers. Some of the evidence is found right here at home, as the programme briefly points out. Piramalai Kallars, who form the majority population in Usilampatti and Thirumangalam near Madurai in Tamilnadu, were studied for health reasons by Professor Pitchaiappan initially, but the genetic evidence was leading to other exciting conclusions, that the Piramalai Kallars had the same unique genetic markers as those found in the African and Australian studies, and markers found in Central Asian people.

Professor Pitchaiappan's findings which were also backed up by similar findings about significant levels of the same gene markers in Yadavas and Saurashtra communities., lead to the postulation of a Cape Comerin route of migration of Man from Africa to Australia. Some evidence also points to markers from Middle Eastern peoples. The study by Piramalai Kallar and other communities which are described by geneticists as sub divided gene pools, points to migratory evidence from genetic markers such as M130 [50,000 years old] and M20, the latter estimated to be 35,000 years old and derived from the former. The ancestors of the Kallars might have expanded from the Middle East, postulates Professor Pitchaiappan who heads the Department of Immunology. Yet other markers like the M172 [found in Baluchis and also Yadhavas] and M17 [found in Central Asians and also in Saurastrians] fuel the excitement that people essentially moved over thousands of years from one part of the globe to another, where they settled down. Features got differentiated due to isolation of the population and climatic factors. Journey of Man unifies the world, and let genetics do the talking, wrote The Hindu Reporter G.Ananthakrishnan.

The spread of human race from Africa is best illustrated in the web pages of www.bradshawfoundation.com, where they show the chart of the spread with time frame. The fact to be borne in mind is that in spite of prejudice destined to disappear as universal reason, scientific progress and information age enlightening our intellect; it seems to be the

contrary in Indian society still clinging to caste prejudices.

Our society had failed to root out prejudices. Immanuel Kant described Enlightenment as man's release from self incurred tutelage. We still live under such mental tutelage accepting Aryan supremacy and our inferiority status in caste hierarchy. It is here the argument of Ambedkar assumes great importance. If the Aryan race theory is buried its counter theory the Dravidian theory too had to go. It would be appropriate here to mention that first Non-Brahmin Movement came into existence. Then it assumed the name of Self Respect Movement before settling for the word Dravidian movement. Dravidian movement is an uprising against the oppressors and their theory of supremacy on earth by birth with religious sanction. Therefore Dravidian movement could be placed among the human emancipation movements all through the human history.

The word India, Hindu and Indus came from the Indus Valley civilization, which is beyond an iota of doubt is Dravidian civilization. Hence usage of Hindu and Hinduvta by the Aryan camp aims to mislead the indigenous people of this sub continent to bring all under the Aryan umbrella, so there will be constant attacks on the weak links or missing links in history to prove the Brahmanical religion as Hindu religion, not allowing to retrieve the other elements like Naga worship or Murugan worship to establish they were different but woven into mythologies to create a façade of one religion. When Dr.Subramanian Swamy wrote an article in The Frontline dated July

18-2003 to blast the Dravidian Movement, only two leaders from Dravidian movement wrote a rejoinder, one being then General Secretary of Dravida Kazhagam K.Veeramani and me. Let me quote few paragraphs from what I wrote

“All humans are one and scientific studies have revealed that there exists a common gene in all human beings and that common gene is called sangene. The mapping of human genes for 50 years had thrown more light on the oneness of humanity, as theories of continental drift, especially the map fit theory, had proved beyond an iota of doubt that all continents were held together once and drifted. So to make all brains free from superiority complex and accept that humanity is one and the world is one, science had to unearth mysteries. The common gene in every human being had also proven that the theories of race are culture oriented. While race is disproved both Aryan and Dravidian theories have to die. Perhaps Dr.Swamy wants the Aryan concept too to die and if that were the case, one can welcome to some extent his wishful thinking. The Second World War waged by Hitler propounding the supremacy of the Aryan race, which he demonstrated with the killings of millions of Jews, still reminds us that whoever claims superiority over fellow beings in the name of his race of birth will be taught a befitting lesson by mankind.”

Dr.Ambedkar says that the theory of Aryan race is just an assumption and nothing more. It is based on the philological proposition put forth by Dr.Bopp in his epoch-making book

called the Comparative Grammar which appeared in 1835. In this book Dr.Bopp demonstrated that a greater number of languages in Europe and some languages in Asia must be referred to common ancestral speech. The European languages and the Asiatic languages to which Dr.Bopp's proposition applied are called Indo-Germanic. Collectively they have come to be called the Aryan languages because Vedic language refers to Aryans and is also the same family as the Indo Germanic. This assumption is the major premise on which the theory of Aryan race is based “

It will also be appropriate that Robert Caldwell's Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages published in 1860 led to the emergence of the word Dravidian race that speaks Dravidian languages. Hence in the light of scientific evidences that prove race is illusionary concept, we have to understand the struggle between Dravidian versus Aryan as struggle between languages. At the moment more than 73 Dravidian languages have been identified and in the quest to find the common language of humanity, within the Nostratic School, there are two strong contenders from Dravidian and Aryan language families.

The grammatical principle laid out in Tholkappiam which dates back to 2872 years to eschew Sanskrit letters and use chaste Tamizh, according to scholars is the day the foundations for Dravidian movement is laid. It began as a fight between Tamizh and Sanskrit, which continued in different forms all through these centuries.

It would be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss Aryanization or Sanskritization of India where other cultural identities got lost, but the script Devanagari used for Hindi demonstrates that Naga script had been adopted for languages without a script on its own. To clear many a confusion books in Pali language or Prakirutham apart from ancient Tamizh have to be dealt in detail.

So we leave it here after proving the Pan-Indian nature of Nagas now reduced to Nagaland, a tiny state in North Eastern part of Indian subcontinent.

THE ENVIRO – HISTORY OF PONDICHERRY

Paper presented by: N. NANDHIVARMAN, General Secretary DRAVIDAPERAVAI in the Seminar organized by Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture on 30th January 2000.

Tamil lack sense of history. This inherent ingredient of the Tamil people is responsible for lack of recorded history at the time when every country woke up to construct its history on facts. We have to mainly depend on literary evidences to write our history. The epic Silappathigaram gave us insight into the landmass that lost in the Indian Ocean.

Now we have other sources to confirm our literary references. With the knowledge explosion, thanks to the internet revolution, we get lot of information. To understand the past history of Tamil Nadu, inclusive of Pondicherry and to foresee its future we have to know about continental drifts and the theory of plate tectonics.

“The Theory of continental drifts, the continents move relative to one another was proposed by ALBERT WEGENER IN 1910. It was not until 1945 that ARTHUR HOLMES suggested a mechanism for the process – convection in the mantle. Completer evidence to convince more scientists that the plate tectonic- the movement of large segments of the outermost shell of the earth has mosaic of large rigid plate- was a reality, was not assembled until the 1960’s.”

The department of Zoological sciences of the Canadian University of Saskatchewan in its web pages state that the plate tectonic is the unifying theory that explains almost all the process at work on the planet. To understand the evolution of our planet and to have coherent idea on earth quakes, volcanoes, mountain belts, oceans basins and the topographic of the sea floor, scholars do rely on the theory of plate tectonics.

Alfred Wegener, known as the father of continental drift, in his publication in 1912 said that "Looking at a global map it would appear that the continents could be brought together to fit like a jig saw puzzle". Mankind is one and this stands proven once again by the geological fact that continents were together at one time and drifted apart. Now every one accepts that as solid upper earth floats on asthenosphere, the lithosphere drifts.

The Earth's crust since its formative period dating back to 4.6 million years constant motion. "Broken into a patchwork of plates and floating on currents in the fluid viscoplastic upper mantle beneath, the plates continuously collide and pull apart. The continental crust is significantly thicker than either oceanic crust or the upper mantle rocks". Some more proofs are given below'

a) The Formation of the Himalayan Mountain is due to the fact of Indian sub-continent moving northward bucking up material while colliding with the Asian continent. The scientists of the earth observatory of Columbia university, New York confirm that the Indo-Australian plate. South

of Equator in the Indian Ocean area. HAS
BROKEN INTO TWO AND EACH IS MOVING
IN ONE DIRECTION in the last 50 million
years Indian subcontinent is drifting @ 5cms a
year towards North. Tibetan plateau and
Himalayas bear the brunt of this mounting
pressure. The ALTYU TAGH fault i.e. geo-
fracture extents 2200 Kilometers in Western
China. MOUNTAIN CHAINS FORMED WITH
LONGITUDINAL AXES PERPENDICULAR TO
THE MOVEMENTS OF CONTINENTS PROVES
THE THEORY OF CONTINENTAL DRIFT. The
western movement of North and South
American continents resulted in the formation
of rocky and Andes Mountains.

b) Scientists have found same fossils,
rocks, mountain ranges or glacial features
located in areas of different continents clearly
prove that prior to the drift, they represent pre
joined positions. In web sites we have
numerous pictures which cannot be down
located, but will visualize you the matching
fossils, mountain ranges and continents ice
deposits. Tamil Elam and Tamil Nadu
separated due to this drift and we have
matching fossils, mountain ranges, rivers
basins etc to prove this, apart from cultural,
literary and other evidences.

c) The Presence and shape of the global
ocean ridge fits into the pre joined areas of
separated continents. The Shape of the
continents of separated continents mostly
evident in the Mid Atlantic Ocean illustrates
this fact. So in studying environ history of
Pondicherry, the impact of continental drift
assumes importance, as it indicates our past
and informs our destination in advance.

ALL THE CONTINENTS ARE MOVING. The crust of Earth since its formation 4, 6 billion years ago is in motion. The floor beneath your feet rests upon a landmass that is continuously on move. The Theory of continental drift is proven beyond doubts by following evidences.

1. The Jigsaw fit of continental margins.
2. The distribution of fossil plants and animals through time.
3. The fit of geological structures and ideologies across continent boundaries.
4. Recent measurements of true relative motion.

The East coast of South America and West Africa look as they would fit together like the pieces of jigsaw puzzle. With a bit of rearranging, most of the continents can be put together. Though this clue led to the inception of this theory, recently the magnetic properties of rocks have been used to demonstrate the movements of continents. Lasers measure the movement across San Andreas Fault in California, where two continental plates the slide past each other .Movement from Satellites show North America and Europe to be drifting apart at the rate of 4 centimeters a year.

CONTINENTAL DRIFTS 550 MILLION YEARS AGO

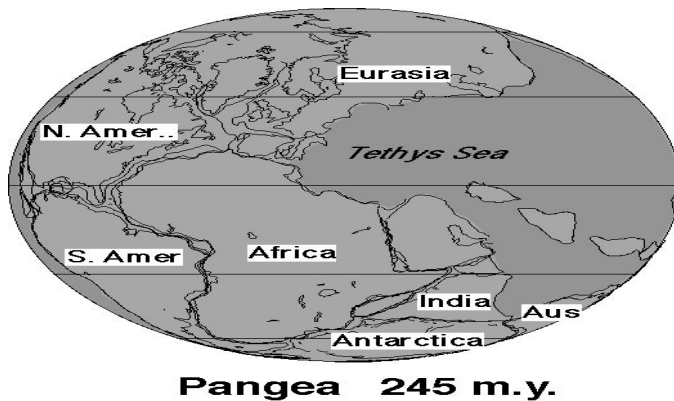
Scientists say that by 550 million years ago the pre-historic continent Europe –America at the end of Paleozoic era, the continents moved

closer to each other and the super continent of Pangaea emerged gradually.



TRIASSIC ERA:

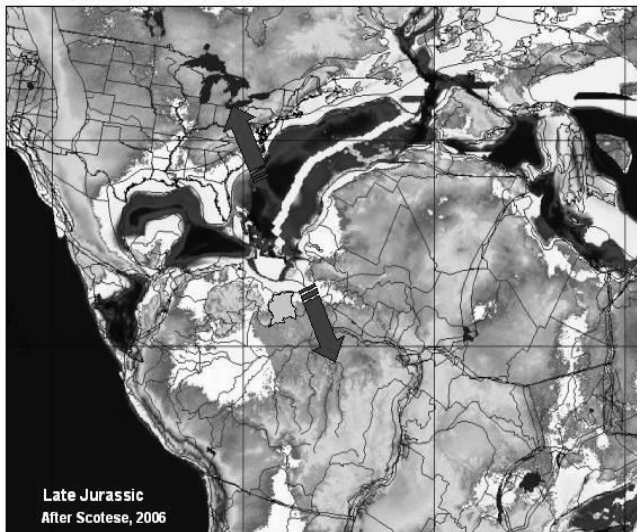
This same super continent by 220 million GOT STARTED TO BREAK. As a rift opened between Northern Africa and Western Eurasia, the TETHYS SEA moved into fill the gap.



JURASSIC ERA:

By 190 million year's ago in the beginning of the Jurassic era a great rift had opened between Northern and Southern Pangaea and the Tethys separated the two primary land masses. North America and Eurasia constipated the northern South America, Africa and remaining continents formed the Southern landmass. The Southern land mass was beginning to break up itself and Antarctica. Australia and India were going there separate ways.-

Late Jurassic Plate Reconstruction



CRETACEOUS ERA:

By 136 million years ago North America and Eurasia had begun to separate. South America and Africa too followed suit.

CENEZONIC ERA:

By 65 million years ago, the continents were beginning to take a recognizable form. Water still covered area that is now Central America. Antarctica and Australia had still not separated INDIA WITH THE CONTINENT OF EURASIA. THIS IS PAST.

WHAT IS THE POSITION TODAY?

Researchers in the EARTH AND PLANETARY SCIENCE LETTERS state THAT INSTEAD OF Earth's SURFACE BEING DIVIDED INTO 12 MAJOR PLATES THERE ARE NOW 13.

In a latest research by Lamont – Doherty Scientists ABOUT 8 MILLION YEARS AGO THE ACCUMULATED MASS OF INDIAN SUBCONTINENT BECAME SO GREAT THAT THE INDO – AUSTRALIAN PLATE BUCKLED AND BROKE UNDER STRESS. The result of this critical stage in the collision between India and Asia is the break up of Indo – Australian Plate into separate Indian and Australian plates.

In the Central Ocean nature is conducting a large scale laboratory experiment for us, showing what happens to the oceanic lithosphere (earth's outer layer) when it is applied.

Using drilled samples in 1970 scientists discovered that a broad zone of the Indian Ocean floor stretching more than 960

kilometers from east to west along with the equator was compressed and deformed. They later found the newly created seafloor had spread outward from the mid – ocean ridges in the zone and theorized that the movement of seafloor could only be fitted in only if a distinct boundary existed between separate Indian and Australian.

To test the theory the Lamont Doherty team used waves to probe the oceanic rock layers in the region. The images showed scores of systematically aligned cracks or faults in the oceanic lithosphere created as the once whole plate buckled and creaked.

TAMIL NADU SCENARIO:

The Director of the School of Earth sciences of Bharathidasan University has done extensive research about the geo- fractures in Tamil Nadu. He along with another scholar S. Balaji writing in the Journal of The Society of Remote Sensing deduces the fracture patterns from the satellite imagery and arrives at the conclusion that they can be classified into 3 classes, as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned.

1. Precambrian fracture systems like EAST NORTH EAST – WEST SOUTH WEST, NORTH EAST – SOUTH WEST, EAST NORTH WEST EAST SOUTH EAST and NORTH NORTH WEST, SOUTH SOUTH EAST trending sets.
2. Precambrian fracture reactivated during quaternary times the NORTH EAST – SOUTH

WEST, WEST NORTH EAST – EAST
SOUTHEAST TRENDING SETS.

3. Quaternary fracture like NORTH – SOUTH trending sets with fracture oscillations to NORTH NORTH WEST – SOUTH SOUTH EAST to NORTH EAST – SOUTH SOUTH WEST.

The scholars further state that “such multivariate type of fracture systems were corrected with seismic episodes of Tamil Nadu, the correlation shows THAT MOST OF THE EARTH QUAKE EPICENTERS ARE FALLING ALONG THE CLOSE PROXIMITIES OF NORTH – SOUTH trending quaternary fracture and North East – South West trending Precambrian shear faults which show signs of reactivation during quaternary times AMONG THESE THE NORTH – SOUTH TRENDING FAULT SYSTEMS WERE DEMONSTRATED TO BE EXTENSIONAL FAILURE OF QUATERNARY ORIGIN CAUSED DUE TO THE NORTHERLY DIRECTED GREATEST PRINCIPAL STRESS.

There are nature triggered changes and there are also changes aggravated by mankind's misdeeds. We in Pondicherry have to look beneath our feet before we can conclude on this subject. NORTHEAST – SOUTHWEST TRENDING FAULT IS THERE IN BETWEEN PONDICHERRY – CUDDALORE in the NORTH EAST AND KAMBAM VALLEY IN THE SOUTH WEST (Kodiakanal and Kambam valley).

**MORPH TECTONIC SCENARIO OF
SOUTH INDIA.**

IT IS SIGNIFICANT TO OBERVE THAT THE EARTHQUAKE EPICENTERS FALL ALONG SUCH NORTH EAST – SOUTH WEST TRENDING FAULT IN PONDICHERRY, CUDDALORE, ARUYALUR, DINIGUL AND KODAIKANAL.

It becomes evident that the experiment of nature by way of continental drift results in faults / geo – fractures and these fractures are responsible from river migrations to earthquakes. In the past 100 years in the rector scale of 3 – 4, almost 70 tremors have issued the fore warning to the people of Tamil Nadu. The tremor that occurred in Coimbatore around 1900 alone the 6 rector scale. The studies by satellite reveal that ARAKKONAM, VANIYAMPADI, POUR, TIRUVANNAMALAI, VELLORE, KRIDSHNAGIRI, DHARMAPURI, METTUR, SALEM, KODAIKANAL, DINDIGUL, ARIYALUR, CUDDALORE PONDICHERRY and CHENNAI as EPI – CENTERS WITH NUMBER OF TREMORS. So Pondicherry is prone to earthquakes and in planning our future construction actives we have to emulate the Japanese techniques.

Another factor that must cause worry is the land subsidence phenomenon. LAND ALONG MAGALORE – CHENNAI in the NORTH and COCHINE – RAMESWARAM IN THE SOUTH HAS UNDERGONE REGIONAL ARCHING. BETWEEN PONONI IN THE WEST COAST AND MANAMELKUDI IN THE EAST COAST A COMPLIMENTARY DEEPING IS TRACED.

DUE TO TECTONIC ACTIVITY NORTH – NORTH TRENDING FAULTS ARE OPEING UP

LIKE LENSES. EAST NORTH EAST – WEST SOUTH WEST TRENDING FAULTS SHOW LEFT HANDED TRANSLATION MOVEMENT.

IN SUCH A GEO – MILEAU PARTICULARLY IS A NOTEWORTHY LAND SUBSIDENCE BETWEEN PONDICHERRY IN THE NORTH – EAST AND KAMBAM VALLY IN THE SOUTH – WEST.

Other studies available corroborate finding based on satellite remote sensing techniques. For instance the photo-geological study confirms the existence of the west of the coastline, a straight scarp running parallel to Pondicherry – Marakkanam Road.

A report on THE GROUNDWATER SURVEY AND EXPLORATION IN THE UNION TERRITORY OF PONDICHERRY AND ITS ENVIRONS PREPARED BY THE Central Ground Water Board (1975) states: The general strike of the cretaceous – Paleocene formations trends NE – SW with gentle dips ranging from 2 to 5 towards north east. The Cuddalore sandstone formation though maintains the same strike, shows a dip up to 10. The cretaceous and Paleocene beds form an inlier having been exposed due to them completely. A low angle fault trending in the NNE – SSW direction is inferred from Mudranpalayam. This fault passes just west of the bore holes drilled by the OIL and NATURAL GASES COMMISSION at Mudrapalayam and Morandichavadi which when extended passes close to Rayapudhukuppam where the rocks show high and irregular dips. Probably this fault takes a swerve towards north east beyond

Kadaperikuppam and Manaveli formations. The contact between the bore holes at Muratandichavadi is marked by breocinted clay stone indicating probably a fault zone. The limited thickness of Kadaperikuppam formation in the bore holes at Kolaveri, Mudrapalayam and Murattandichavadi appears to be the result of above said at a depth further north of the slim hole at Alankuppam.

So what was found in 1973 stands confirmed by pictures taken through remote sensing techniques by satellites.

This is neither prophecy nor sooth – saying but a warning issued by science in this age of rationalism. The future landmass of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry inclusive of its coastline is expected to undergo drastic changes due to the impact of continental drift, its resultant geo – fractures and man made environmental failures.

For instance due to green house effect towards north east beyond Kadaperikuppam and Manaveli formations sea levels are rising around 2100 the sea level is found to rise from 0.5 meter to 1.5 meter. Poompuhar, the PORT OF CHOLA EMPIRE is now submerged in the Bay of Tamil Nadu, sorry because of Tamil's slumber and lack of cultural consciousness, we have to call our seas Bay of Bengal.

Sirkazhi, a coastal town is now an island town for away from the coast. Many million years ago Chennai, Chengelpet, Trichy and Madurai were beneath the seas. Before 90000 years

age, Pondicherry and Vedaranyam were islands says Prof. S. Ramasamy, Head of the Department of Earth sciences of Bharathidasan University.

1. A new landmass, perhaps a portion of the lost continent of Lemuria will reappear in the Indian Ocean annexing Tamil Ealam, and land linking it with the Southern Tamil Nadu.
2. Between Palaghat and Pudhukottai like Panama Canal, a canal will divide North and South Tamil Nadu.
3. Pondicherry will once again become an Island.
4. As we can predict cyclones, this age of science provides us clue of what is in stores in future?

To postpone the calamities and our dooms day let us conserve our water resources. As Prof. Ramasamy cautions care must be take in avoiding developmental activities, industrialization and also construction of engineering structures.

With regard to soil erosion scientists have found gully erosion mainly in North western part of Tamil Nadu and sheet erosion in the central plains. HENCE IT IS SUGGESTED TO PUGE ALL WNW – ESE trending ministerial faults adopting gullet plugging techniques. To minimize sheet erosion along NE – SW trending quaternary reactivated faults soil conservation must be promoted with urgency. Pollution discharging industries should be avoided in this area, scientists forewarn.

Looking back at our past let us remind ourselves of our duties today to have a safer tomorrow.

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SAVING THE SEA COAST

Nowadays seas frighten the fisher folk. For centuries fisher folk had established unassailable bond of love with seas, but in post tsunami phase every change in the sea causes nightmare. The sea recedes and people become panicky. Waves enter villages lashing out the beaches. People run hither thither for safety. Kanyakumari to Cuddalore almost for a week people of the coast spent sleepless nights and anxious days. This scenario had wakened up the social thinkers and scientists to look for solutions to coastal erosion. Changes due to continental drift are inevitable. Here too if we look at the projections made by scientists, the future world map of 100 million years and 250 million years show changes in India's position but India always remain attached to the Asian continent. This should be viewed with consolation, because in past India was an island nation separated from Asia.

“Our planet is a tri-axial ellipsoid, moving around the Sun in an elliptical orbit at 30 kilometers per second and rotating around its axis at 1,666 kilometers per hour which is faster than speed of sound. Such high speed rotation has resulted in polar areas being compressed towards the center and equatorial areas being bulged out” says Professor Vishal Sharma. Apart from these changes the coast of Tamil Nadu had undergone variations in the past but the present causes more concern. As per a study by the School of Earth Sciences of Bharathidasan University “Before 1.5 million years ago Sea extended up to Madurai.

Around 90,000 years before Chennai, Pondicherry and Vedranyam were encircled by seas. Since sea level subsided 65,000 years ago India and Ceylon got connected. When sea level rose by 27,000 years ago both parted and when it fell by 17,000 years before joined again to part again". And amidst panic reaction to such studies, if we look at the map of coastal changes in Tamil Nadu, one could know that the coast instead of moving inwards had extended seawards. This is enough to give us fresh hope for survival braving the fury of Nature.

VARYING TAMIL NADU COAST

The sea erosion of coast is not an India specific problem. "More than 80 percent of the world shorelines are eroding at the rates varying from centimeters to meters per year." says Orrin.H.Pelkey, Professor of Geology and Director of the Program for the study of Developed Shorelines in the Duke University, North Carolina, USA. He had authored two books and one of its titles has a message to all of us. "Living by the Rules of the Sea" is his book and it is high time we learn to live by the rules of the seas.

A walk in the beach and breathing its salubrious breeze is world wide habit. But how many of those who visit beaches is aware on how beaches are formed? People are worried about erosion. But it is a fact that without erosion beaches could not be formed. "Without the process of erosion, we would not have beaches, dunes, barrier beaches and the highly productive bays and estuaries that owe

their existence to the presence of barrier beaches" opines Jim O'Connell, the Coastal Processes Specialist of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Well erosion might have helped beach formation, but it is sending alarm bells from Kanyakumari to Chennai and beyond. Let us look for some scholarly opinion in this regard. After a close study at the Pitchavaram forests near Chidambaram, M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation reveals that "in between 1930 and 1970, the seashore had eroded by 550 meters. Between 1970 and 1992 the rate of erosion was about 12 meters." The writing on the wall is clear. In past Sirkazhi was a coastal town, which now is interior by kms. The Harbour of Choza Empire, Poompuhar is now beneath the seas. At present warning from Pitchavaram must awaken us.

Apart from facing Nature's onslaughts with preventive measures, human errors too needs to be corrected. Sand is the food for beaches, and it is needless to say that our rivers are not supplying that food to the beaches. Human exploitation and drying of rivers depletes sand supply to beaches. Interlinking of rivers as often advised by our President A.P.J.Abdul Kalama will not only solve water crisis but will save dying beaches. Sea level rise is primarily due to the thermal expansion of the sea water and melting of the glaciers and ice caps. Artic Climate Impact assessment by 250 scientists says that "global warming is heating the Artic almost twice as fast as rest of the planet" United Nations sponsored Inter Governmental panel on climate change will be bringing out its fourth assessment by 2007. Changing Winds and currents in the Indian Ocean in

1990's contributed to the global warming says a NASA study in the Geophysical Research Letters. The recent lashing of waves of Tamil Nadu coast was triggered by a storm near Australia, scientists say.

The National Hurricane Center of USA reports that "hurricanes release heat energy at the rate of 50 trillion to 200 trillion watts. This is equivalent to 10 mega ton nuclear bomb exploding about every 20 minutes." But we in India are in one way lucky. Our coast will not be hit by hurricanes. Our cyclones are less intense. Storms that hit continental America have almost the full width of Atlantic Ocean to gain strength, since our cyclones emanate from Bay of Bengal there is neither room nor time for them to grow, and this natural phenomenon helps us in one way.

Global warming also causes rise in sea level inundating coastal areas. We must know that most of the ice sheet rests on land that's below sea level. At a point called the "grounding line" it starts floating, thus displacing its own weight in water. And as it turns out, the line may not move much because the flow of the ice streams seems to be restrained by friction against rocks at the bottom and sides rather than the ice shelf. So if the ice shelf melts, the flow of the streams should not change appreciably. And since the volume added to the ocean depends on how much ice moves from land to water -- as determined by the grounding line -- the upshot seems to be relative stability. "The ice streams do not appear to be susceptible to the kind of unstable retreat once envisaged," says Bentley. "Their flow is largely insensitive to the

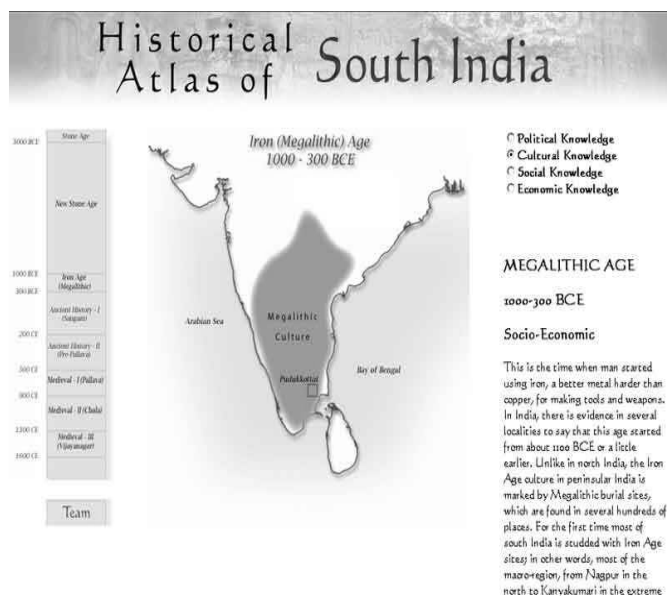
presence of the ice shelf so the grounding line would remain the same." Instead of possibly collapsing in 100 years, as was considered possible 10 years ago, Bentley says the West Antarctic Ice Sheet is more likely to collapse -- if at all -- in perhaps 5,000 years at the soonest. By this scientific prediction it becomes evident that sea level rise by global warming too will not cause more harm in near future, if we are well prepared for it with preventive measures. If governments have plans for beach nourishment with vegetation, which is the cheapest preventive measure, it will go a long way in arresting coastal erosion. Our survival instincts will save us in planet Earth, but let us strive to survive with forethought. -N.Nandhivarman

Courtesy: The New Indian Express- 4.06.2005

HISTORICAL ATLAS OF SOUTH INDIA

N.Nandhivarman

A partnership in research yields good results. At present “The Department of Epigraphy and Archaeology of the Tamil University Thanjavur and The Laboratory of Geomatics and Applied Informatics of the French Institute Pondicherry have joined together to develop and deploy a digital Atlas of South India on the internet accessible to everyone, presenting the political, social and cultural and all inclusive history of South India through a combination of maps, illustrations, texts and geographical information” said Dr.Y. Subburayalu, Coordinator of the unique project on South India.



Tamil University Thanjavur for past decade had been collecting each and every bit of information, which forms the basic data. It joined hands with the Institut Francaise de Pondicherry under the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs for incorporating all these data into the Atlas from 2000 and in four years covered lot of ground. In the meanwhile Mahatma Gandhi University of Kottayam, Mangalore University and Hyderabad University have joined as new partners. Because already for decades lot of basic data had been collected and readily available in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the first phase of the project covers the entire two states. But since Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka entered late into the fray they are currently working on two pilot projects only to gain momentum soon.

Using the maps by Survey of India as base maps and improving upon them with maps provided by satellite pictures the Historical Atlas of South India is being prepared. The satellite imagery will be in the background and these maps will have 30 layers of information packed to suit the needs of every scholar's choice.

The Geomatics and Applied Informatics Laboratory of the French Institute Pondicherry that plays a pivotal role is a laboratory that specializes in the acquisition, management, modeling and analysis of spatial information on the Indian sub-continent with the aim to address scientific queries. "The contribution of the laboratory to the research projects is based on expertise in the development of Geographic Information Systems and analysis of satellite remote sensing data and favours a

multi-disciplinary and integrative approach. Recently, the laboratory was responsible for launching a new area of activity pertaining to the development of web-browser based applications for the dissemination of scientific results through CD-ROMs and the web” according to informed sources.

Looking at the other side of the world we find that United Nations realized the need for a marriage of technology and history when it accepted in 1974 a new map prepared for the world by Arno Peters, a German scholar. Peter’s map shows countries in their respective sizes and is based on Peter’s decimal grid, which divided the surface of the earth into hundred longitudinal fields of equal width and hundred latitudinal fields of equal height.

Because much before this map was accepted the Atlases based on Mercator maps showed Greenland and Scandinavia to be bigger than India. Russia appeared bigger than entire continent of Africa. It seemed that Europe occupied more areas than South America. “These are not due to limitations of mathematics, but a deliberate attempt to show Colonial Europe as bigger than non-European world” opines Vishal Sharma. Hence to rectify this anomaly Peter’s projections came to be accepted by United Nations.

The Historical Atlas of South India too is an attempt to update knowledge keeping room to add fresh every new information as and when found. Thus it is an attempt to keep perfection and precision.

Dating back to 5 lakh years and covering the Stone Age up to 10,000 years ago the Atlas travels down and the New Stone Age between 3000 to 4000 years ago. It covers the metal age and pre-historical period of 1600 A.D and thus Atlas provides every information in a nutshell. Tamil University Thanjavur, which studied extensively, and intensively Pudukottai area have established the contributions of Jains to the iconography of Tamils. The well built tank irrigation system of Pudukottai region with inscriptions found in the sluices of the tanks yielded lot of information on irrigation and land administration. This information is fed into the Atlas.

The Atlas is arranged in a time line of eight broad periods. It covers four major themes such as Political, Social, Economical and Cultural. Textual information is provided in link files. One can access these at <http://www.ifpindia.org>

Apart from the Atlas prepared by one of its divisions, The French Institute [IFP] has an extremely rare collection of photographs dating back to 1956. This assorted collection consists of about 1,23,000 black and white photographs and 5500 color films and slides focusing on South Indian religious art and iconography including temple views, stone and bronze statues, paintings, architectural motifs, pre-historic cave rock paintings, palaces, jewelry etc.

The Department of Indology at the IFP has the unique distinction of being a meeting place for the exchange of scientific thoughts

and ideas between Western Indologists on the one hand and traditional Indian scholars on the other. The Department houses an impressive collection of 10000 bundles of manuscripts and photographs of manuscripts on Saivasiddhanta along with 1, 30,000 photographs of temples and sculptures on religious art in South India “In its vast centralized air-conditioned library from where one can see the Bay of Bengal it is surprising that local Tamil magazines and English news papers etc are not be found” commented a social activist. Researching the past must reach the present society and today’s news is tomorrow’s history.

Courtesy: July 16th 2005 New Indian Express-Week End.

THE CRADLE OF CRAFTS AND ITS EXPORTS

N.Nandhivarman

The international attention may have dawned upon Arikamedu after its archaeological excavations. The trade between Arikamedu and Red Sea Ports is an established fact. . But scholars of the Euro-centric view who hold any significant innovation to have a European or at least Mediterranean origin nowadays find their fantasies shattered. The role of South India in world commerce is now slowly but grudgingly being acknowledged. “Arikamedu was occupied far longer than had been thought and must be considered a South Indian city rather than principally Roman. The lowest levels we could reach go back to the Second century B.C, long before the Romans came. My historical investigations indicate that Arikamedu was occupied down to the seventeenth century, and a date nearly as recent is confirmed archaeologically, at least tentatively.” says Peter Francis Junior who passed away in December 2001.

The French astronomer Guillaume Le Gentil on the basis of some visible evidences recorded the importance of Arikamedu in his travelogue written in French titled as: “Voyage dans les mers de l’Inde” (Paris 1779-81).

G.Jouveau Dubreuil described Arikamedu as a Port city called Puduke. L.Faucheux and R.Sarleau published the findings of their excavations in “Les Recherches Archeologiques” in 1942. Apart from these

initial studies the first by scientific methods of excavation in 1945 by Mortimer Wheeler is widely known. The book *Rome beyond the Imperial Frontiers* (1954) by Wheeler left an impression that “a sleepy fishing village suddenly awakened by enterprising Romans who built stone buildings and a port, then fell back to sleep when the Romans left” feels Francis Peter Junior. From the arretine pottery, table wares used by Romans found there h Wheeler came to the conclusion that Roman trade flourished between 14 to 25 B.C. Jean Mari Casal conducted his excavations between 1947 and 1950 and opined much before Romans advent, Arikamedu was a prosperous port dating back to 250 B.C. People of that place were civilized even during Iron Age claims J.M.Casal who found gold jewels in burial sites of Suthukeny and was stunned by the prosperity of the people. Vimala Begley in a collaborative project of University of Pennsylvania Museum and University of Madras excavated the site between 1989 and 1992. The first volume of her monumental work *The Ancient Port of Arikamedu: New Excavations and Researches Volume I*, a publication by L'Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient in 1996 threw more light, and though she passed away on 21 st March 2000, lovers of archaeology are eagerly awaiting the release of her second volume. Also there is a demand to bring out books in Tamil on these researches. These subsequent researches have found that the glory of the site is due to local initiative.

“The place was important and the bead making industries well established before the Romans came. The Romans went there

precisely because it was an important port. After whatever constituted the Roman "emporium" was gone, Arikamedu was still very much in touch with the West, sending its gems that direction and receiving wine and other amphorae-packed Mediterranean products for centuries." Says Francis Peter Junior. "Arikamedu traders imported copper, gold, silver, olive oil and wine from west and spices from East. In return their small scale industries were engaged in manufacturing shell bangles, stone bead making by polishing and cutting of semi precious stones like banded agate, cornelian, onyx, jasper, crystalline beryl, aquamarine quartz, amethyst etc, and terracotta for export purposes. Large scale industries were engaged in textiles, dyeing, glass bead making and metal works "says P.Ravichandiran, Lecturer in History at Ayvvaiyar College for Women at Karaikal, who assisted Vimala Begley in the excavations and a scholar with number of research papers to his credit.

Francis Peter Junior states, "The chief product of Arikamedu must have been beads. It is the first place known to have made small, drawn (cut from a tube) glass beads, the types found almost universally for two millennia. Its stone bead industry was also impressive, and its lapidaries made several important innovations in the field. Workers in the glass bead (Indo-Pacific bead) industry migrated to other places: Mantai, Sri Lanka; Khlong Thom, Thailand; Oc-eo, Vietnam; Srivijaya/Palembang, Sumatra; Sungai Mas, Malaysia; Kuala Selinsing, Malaysia; and Takua Pa, Thailand have now been identified as housing such work. This constituted the largest and

longest-lived glass bead industry ever. Stone bead making survived down through the end of the last century, but no trace is now left." Arikamedu much before the word outsourcing was coined imported raw materials and used its craftsmen to finish products for export purposes. This historical fact about the Pondicherry must be borne in mind to set up 100% Export oriented industries and a Special Economic Zone for that purposes to commemorate the memory and legacy of Arikamedu. The revival of Pondicherry Port to once again attract world's attention is to regain the heritage that is lost in the onslaughts of time.

Arikamedu's impact on world trade was impressive. Arikamedu products like glass beads, stone beads, ceramics were in Indonesia by the first century B.C. "The West demanded the garnets, prase, citrine and other stone beads and agate cameo blanks produced in Arikamedu between 1st Century and 1200 A.D. Indo-Pacific beads, though not all of which were made at Arikamedu proper, account for 62.2% of all beads of all materials excavated at all archaeological sites as far away as the Philippines. The Arabs took Indo-Pacific beads to East Africa and across North Africa, through the Sahara to the Forest Zone of West Africa. The Portuguese procured from Arikamedu because they were in demand in Mozambique."

There are striking parallels between Indo-Pacific bead making and later techniques and technologies in Europe and America. The Indian prototypes are a millennium or older.

The Archeological Survey of India had declared the site as a protected monument and plans are afoot for setting up a site museum. It will also be appropriate to create a Center for Gemology and a Crafts village to settle artisans for reviving these industries that brought Pondicherry into world map by its exports, much before any foreigner set his foot to rule here

Courtesy: New Indian Express: 4th September 2004

TOPONYMICAL PROBE TRACING ONENESS OF HUMANITY

Pondicherry is a melting pot of various linguistic groups and cultures. Therefore it is no surprises that lot of people from Orissa have found a haven in Pondicherry. Trailing them to study for his research papers R.Balakrishnan I.A.S, Chief Electoral Officer of Government of Orissa often visits Pondicherry. There is another dimension to his visits, which is to pay respects to his teacher Dr.Vijayavenugopal of Ecole Francaise D'Extreme Orient. Mr.Balakrishnan had presented numerous research papers and he specializes in toponymical probe.

“Place names are fossilized representations of the past. In retracing the footprints of our ancestral migrations, place names can be our guiding stars. Our case in this regard is built on the foundation that the migrating people do carry their place names and reuses them in new found homeland as a mark of continuity with past.” says R.Balakrishnan explaining the rationale of the toponymical probe he had ventured into.

In an article that appeared in the International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics, R.Balakrishnan throws “New lights on ancient contacts between Kalinga and Indonesia”. A study conducted by him revealed remarkable similarities between the place names of Java, Sumatra and Bali regions of Indonesia on one hand and the places of Southern Orissa on

the other hand. The Chilka region of Orissa seems to have been the focal point of Kalingan interactions with South East Asia.

Balakrishnan is serious in his research and had done extensive travel to remote regions to draw similarities of place names. In another research paper titled Tamil: A Toponymical Probe he had given a long list of place names that bear the “Tam” prefixes. In a state wise alphabetical list of Tam prefixed place names in India, he states that in Andhra Pradesh [29], Arunachal Pradesh [11], Assam [38], Bihar [53], Gujarat [5], Goa [1], Haryana [3], Himachal Pradesh [34], Karnataka [24], Maharashtra [120], Meghalaya [5], Manipur [14], Madhya Pradesh [60], Nagaland [4], Orissa [84], Punjab [4], Rajasthan [26], Tamil Nadu [10], Uttar Pradesh [64], West Bengal [24] with a grand total of 612 places names resembling Tamil and Tamil influences do occur.

This research may sound funny, but researches are always working out new avenues to trace truths of the past. One of the pioneers of rice research in India Mr. Ramiah had identified Jeypore region of Orissa as another independent center of origin of rice. Subsequent researches established that broad geographical region comprising Jharkhand; Chhattisgarh, Western Orissa and Jeypore tracts of Orissa satisfy the basic requirements to claim as center of origin of cultivated rice. If one can trace roots of rice cultivation why not trace roots of a civilization and its spread, asks Dr. Arivunambi, Dean of Tamil Studies in Pondicherry University.

“In the Godda District of Bihar there is a village named Tamilgoda. In that District alone there are 12 place names, which end goda Tamilgoda is one of them. In the Puri District of Orissa a place name called Tamilikudi draws our immediate attention. There is no need to establish the Dravidian etymology of the suffix kudi. Tamilikudi is not an isolate case of occurrence as there are 37 place names with kudi suffix within the administrative boundary of Orissa.

“In the process of locating Tamil related place names the entire list of India was scrutinized and I found a name called Tamia in Chindwara District of Madhya Pradesh. Having come across Tamilgoda and Tamilkudi is not surprising to me. However when this name was noticed in the surprising company of such typical Tamil place names Palani, Tekadi, Theni, Bodi and many other geographical names that are in currency in the Madurai region of Tamilnadu and its adjoining upcountry neighbor Idukki, its significance and implications could be understood,” says Balakrishnan.

Another research paper titled “Toponymy of Konark”, by Balakrishnan traces the spread of the word Kona. The place name of Konark is a combination of two words kona and arka. A search for Kona as a place name prefix reveals as many as 249 occurrences. Out of this Kona, a mono word place name has been used at least in 13 places [4 in Andhra Pradesh, 3 in Uttar Pradesh, and 2 in Madhya Pradesh one each in Orissa, Bihar, Haryana and Maharashtra]. Kon seems to be a universal term. The primitive tribes of Austro-Asiatic

and Dravidian origin use the term as much as the speakers of Indo-Aryan do. Even the English terms such as cone, conical based on Latin conus (derived from Greek konus) show definite affinity with the term.

Depending on the context, Vedic people used a number of terms to denote angle and most common of them is Karna. The term Karna means Sun, the son of Kunti by Surya and hence the sun nexus of the term would be obvious. Karna denoting ray or beam of light is considered to be the basis for the Greek term Karneios that means radiant. This establishes the nexus between the angle and ray. The Peruvian prefix Kon means Sun and the mythical Sun king who claimed direct descent from Sun is called Kon-Tiki. So goes on Balakrishnan identifying in Iran on the Gulf of Oman just 3 km away from main coastline a village called Konark. About 5 kms away from Persian Gulf he traces another village Konark. Again in the plateau of Iran he finds Konark. The toponymical probe is a new way to establish oneness of the human race. Deveneya Paavanar and his successor R.Madhivanan have used etymological probes to prove that all languages emanated from one common language. As all continents were once united in Pangaea that in Latin means All Earth, the distribution of place names across continents in another way proves continental drift and the migration of human race from one place to another.

Courtesy: The New Indian Express -weekend-
18.06-2005

UNIVERSAL FESTIVAL OF HARVEST

N.Nandhivarman

Tamils are celebrating Pongal. In North India it is known as Sankranthi. This festival of harvest is universal one practiced by remote tribes on earth and people of various cultures, which again proves the oneness of humanity.

In the Volga region when the Sun was moving in the direction of spring, people came together to forecast the future harvest. The Mari and Chuvashes, tribal groups in Volga region prepared special food for this festival of harvest. These festivals were connected with first ploughing and sowing. The festivities took place in the field. A little bit of food was sacrificed to Mother Earth.

Slav people had their sun deities. They were called Svarog, Dazhbog, and Khors. The word god (bag) is same in all Slavic languages. You can see the resemblance with Iranian бага and Indian bhagwan with the Slavic bag. These similarities also remind us that beliefs are universal.

The Zulus of South Africa worshipped the Goddess Nomkubulwana. They believed that this goddess made land fertile and was the mythical originator of agriculture. Only women did all farming work among Zulu tribes and they only performed rites and chanted prayers for a good harvest.

Almost all people of the Caucasus region worshipped guardians of harvest and other kind of livestock. Does it make us think about Maattu Pongal, thanksgiving to cattle prevalent among Tamil people.

Celtic gods were guardians of fertility and agriculture. River Gods and Spring Gods were existent. Esus was the god of plant life.

In Mexico the agrarian influence could be seen in the Uitzilopochtti cult. During the celebrations held twice a year an enormous dummy of the God was made out of flour dough and honey. After the religious rites are over the figure was broken into pieces and eaten by all the participants.

In the Chinese civilization the cult of Shen-nong i.e. Divine Farmer is note worthy. The legendary Divine Farmer is supposed to have invented agriculture. A special sacrificial altar was devoted to him in Peking, where the emperor solemnly brought offerings. In early spring every year an important state ceremony was held to mark the first ploughing season. The Chinese Emperor accompanied by prominent dignitaries ploughed a furrow on a sacred plot of the land. The God of the land was known as She and peasants offered sacrifices to her as part of spring and autumn rituals.

In the Shintoist religion of Japan the most revered Gods are Amaterasu i.e. Sun Goddess and Inari i.e. Rice Man, the guardian of farming portrayed with two rice stalks and often together with a Fox.

In the ancient Egyptian religion the God Osiris deserves mention. Every year Egyptians celebrated the death and resurrection of Osiris. The image of Osiris was made out of sown wheat on the layer of soil that was sprinkled into a special wooden frame. These festivities lasted 18 days and involved ritual ploughing and sowing. Osiris is the direct personification of grain,

In Asia Minor the Mother of the Gods was named Ma, Rhea, and Cybele. Her husband was a young god of fertility named as Attis. There is also another myth about the deity of plant life and fertility. God Telepinus once suddenly disappeared it is stated. Because of his disappearance grass dried up. Fields failed to yield crops. Cattle stopped multiplying. Woman no longer bore children. To put an end to this state of affairs the other gods organized a search for this God. A bee found him and awakened him, so goes the myth.

In Greek religion in the agricultural cult Demeter, the goddess was offered with bloodless offerings like fruits, grapes, honey combs and freshly reared sheep wool. These offerings were placed on an altar and covered with olive oil. Numerous such stories, myths and beliefs could be found in various civilizations. The Greek Goddess Hera wife of God Zeus was apparently a cow goddess. Signs of cow worship were found in excavations. It is heartening to note that Tamils worshipping cow goddess in Maattu Pongal times is a practice found in Greek civilization too.

In the Roman religion in the first month of spring March, festivities were held in honour of Mars. Faunus was the guardian angel of live stocks and he was the god of shepherds. At the end of winter on Feb 17 a jolly holiday Lupercalis was celebrated in her honour. Liber was the god of wine making. Saturnus the god of sowing. Jupiter the god of grapes.

Romans too worshipped gods as Pax (Peace), Spes (Hope), and Virtus(valour), Justitia (Justice), Fortuna(Happiness) etc. If we analyze at the concepts on religion in various cultures we can understand its inherent meanings. Mankind had been striving to be grateful to Nature and agricultural festivities like Pongal demonstrate this common urge of human race, which is one and indivisible. While Tamil people hail Pongalo Pongal and thank Nature for its kindness, Harvest festivals of various civilizations remind us that our festival has universal appeal.

Courtesy: 22nd January 2005 New Indian Express

CHERA-CHOZHA-PANDYA HISTORY

N.Nandhivarman

I read the book “Kadaikazhaga Noolhalin Kaalamum Karuthum {Period and Message of Sangam Literature 500 B.C to 500 A.D] written by Dr.R.Mathivanan Former Director of Tamil Etymological Dictionary Project of Government of Tamilnadu. In the preface to the book the learned scholar says, “Japanese have preserved their past history spanning to 2440 years, whereas Egyptians and Sumerians recall with pride their 4000 years of history. The 3000-year-old history of Chinese gives them a unique place. But Tamils with 10000 year of history have not brought it to the world arena.

In Chicago Museum a portrait depicting a Tamil climbing a Palmyra tree mentioning him as Tamil came to the notice of Aringnar Anna that was taken up with the authorities. Instead of many cultural achievements of Tamils this portrait showed Tamil in derogative manner, and on protest the portrait was not removed but the word Tamil in the portrait was deleted. Lamenting about lack of a Museum to depict Tamil Culture, the scholar says that he had relied upon the travelogues of foreigners, literary evidences thrown to light in other languages, recent archaeological findings and the findings of historians who have so far dealt with the History of Tamils. His book would be a compilation of all these evidences in a

nutshell, he claims. In Rasatarangini the author Kallanar had brought to light the History of Kashmir from 1800 B.C to 1200 A.D. Like this literary evidence which helped to construct the History of Kashmir, in Tamil the book Nankudi Velir Varalaru comprising 1035 poems and written by Arumuga Nayinar Pillai, which was published in 1920 throws light on the Tamil history, the learned author claims. This book speaks about the family hierarchy of Irungovel, a branch of the Pandyan rulers for 201 generations. This book follows the Kali calendar and narrates the history from 3100 B.C to 1944, hence helps in fixing the date of various rulers and their rule, the author says.

Pandyan dynasty.

Pandyan Palsalai Muthukudumi Peruvazhuthi [66th generation] 500-450 B.C

Karungai Ollvat Perum Peyar vazhuthi [67th generation] 450 B.C to 400 B.C

Porval Vazhuthi [68th generation] 400 B.C to 380.B.C

Korkai Vazhuthi-Nartreer Vazhuthi [69th generation] 380B.C-340 B.C

Deva Pandian [70th generation] 340 B.C-302 B.C

Seya Punjan aliasKadalul maintha Ilamperuvazhuthi [71st] 302B.C-270.B.C

Pasum Poon Pandyan [72nd generation] 270.B.C –245.B.C

Ollaiyur thantha Boothapandian [73rd generation] 245 B.C-220 B.C

Pandyan Nanmaran [74th generation] 220 B.C-200 B.C

Nedunchezhian alias Kadalan vazhithi [75th generation] 200B.C-180 B.C

Marungai Vazhuthi [76th generation] 180 B.C-160 B.C

Pandyan Uthaman alias Puliman vazhuthi [77th] 160B.C-150 B.C

Pandyan Keeran Sathan [78th generation] 150 B.C-140 B.C

Kaliman Vazhuthi alias Andar magan Kuruvazhuthi [79th] 140-120 B.C

Pandyan Yenathi @Nedunkannan [80th] 120 B.C-100 B.C

Korkai Vazhuthi@ Irandam Pasum Poon Pandyan [81st] 100-87 B.C

Deva Pootanan@ Ilavanthikai palli tunjiya Nanmaran [82nd] 87-62 B.C

Thalayanankanathu Cheru Vendra Nedunchezhian [83rd] 62-42 B.C

Kanapereyil kadantha Ukkira Peruvazhuthi [84th] 42 B.C-1 A.D

Pandyan Arivudainambi {Purananooru 184} [85th] A.D 1- 30 A.D

Velliyambalathu tunjiya PeruVazhuthi [86th]
30 A.D-60 A.D

Ariyapadai Kadantha Nedunchezhan [87th]
60 A.D-117 A.D

Vetriver Chezhian [88th generation] 117 A.D-
160 A.D.

Nedunchezhan II [89th generation] 160 A.D –
198 A.D

Ukkira Maran@ Chitramadathu tunjiya
Nanmaran [90th] 198 A.D-220 A.D

Pannadu thantha Maran Vazhuthi [91st]
220A.D-250 A.D

Koddakarathu tunjiya Maranvazhuthi [92nd]
250 A.D-270 A.D

Thennavan Ko [93rd generation] 270 A.D-297
A.D

Parakirama Bahu @ Nalvazhuthi [94th
generation 298A.D -310 A.D

Kaliyan Koothan [95th generation].....

Kadalan Vazhuthi [of Kazhugumalai
inscriptions] [96th generation

Porkai Pandyan [98th generation

Pandyan Kadunkhon [103rd generation] 475
A.D-490 A.D

Ukkira Pandyan [103rd generation] —498
A.D

Somasundara Pandyan [105th generation] 498
A.D-540 A.D.

113 year Pact between Three Tamil Emperors
The Nandhas who ruled North India had fraternal relationship with Three Tamil Emperors but the Mauryas who followed them invaded South India. Imayavaramban Neduncheralathan marched up to Himalayas and inscribed his country symbol, which could not assimilated by the Mauryas who came to Chera country as act of revenge. But the Mauryan armies did not sneak into Chozha territory. This invasion brought home the need to remain united, the call given even now by Kalaignar M.Karunanithi but with no useful purpose to alter ground reality on Tamil disunity. The unity urge united the Three Tamil Emperors who met to sign a Pact of Cooperation in the year 313 B.C, the author Dr.Mathivanan says. Imayavaramban Neduncheralathan, Karungai Olvat Perumvazhuthi and Deva Pandian [70th] jointly signed the declaration of unity that lasted for 113 years. This Treaty of Tamil Unity stood as a rock protecting Tamil lands from Northern invaders.

In the final years of the unity era during 200 B.C, in the Chozha Emperor Karikalan II's court Poetess Mudathamakanniyar who wrote Porunaratrupadai witnessed the rare scene of Three Tamil Emperors sharing same dais which she records in her Porunaratrupadai [53-55]. Poet Kumattor Kannanar who wrote the second ten in Pathitru Pathu also records

the historical meeting of Three Tamil Emperors for which he stands as eyewitness. Later in 42 B.C, Poetess Avvaiyar also had the luck to see Three Tamil Emperors together in a rare scene of Unity among Tamils. That unity did not last nor the lessons of unity learnt till date by Tamils.

THE CHERA EMPERORS:

1. Vanavan @ Vanavaramban [430-350 B.C]
2. Kuttuvan Uthiyan Cheralathan [350-328 B.C] ruled for 22 years
3. Imayavaramban Neduncheralathan [328-270 B.C] ruled for 58 years
4. Palyaanai Chelkezhru Kuttuvan [270-245 B.C] ruled for 25 years
5. Kalangaikanni narmudicheral [245-220 B.C] ruled for 25 years
6. Perumcheralathan [220-200 B.C] ruled for 20 years
7. Kudakko Neduncheralathan [200-180 B.C] ruled for 20 years
8. Kadal Pirakottiya Velkezhru kuttuvan [180-125 B.C] ruled 55 years
9. Adukotpattuch Cheralathan [125-87 B.C] ruled 38 years
10. Selvakkadungo Vazhiyathan [87-62 B.C] ruled 25 years

11. Yanaikatchei Mantharanj Cheral
Irumborai [62-42 B.C] ruled 20 years
12. Thagadoor Erintha Perum Cheral
Irumborai [42-25 B.C] ruled 17 years
13. Ilancheral Irumborai [25-19 B.C] ruled 16
years
14. Karuvur Eriya Koperumcheral Irumborai
[9-1 B.C]
15. Vanji Mutrathu tunjiya Anthuvancheral
[B.C 20 – 10 A.D]
16. Kanaikal Irumborai [20-30 A.D]
17. Palai Padiya Perum kadungko [1-30 A.D]
18. Kokothai Marban [[30 –60 A.D]
19. Cheran Chenguttuvan [60-140 A.D]
20. Kottambalathu tunjiya Maakothai [140-
150 A.D]
21. Cheraman mudangi kidantha
Nedumcheralathan [150-160 A.D]
22. Cheraman Kanaikkal Irumborai [160-180
A.D]
23. Cheraman Ilamkuttuvan [180-200 A.D]
24. Thambi Kuttuvan [200-220 A.D]
25. Poorikko [220-250 A.D]
26. Cheraman Kuttuvan Kothai [250-270 A.D]

27. Cheraman Vanjan [270-300 A.D]

28. Mantharanj Cheral [330-380 A.D] found in Allahabad inscriptions of Samudragupta.

RECONSTRUCTION OF CHOZHA RULE

1. Karikalan I [450-380 B.C]

2. Cheraman Paamaloor erintha
Neythalanganal Ilamchetchenni [380-320 B.C]

3. Cherupaazhi erintha Ilamchetchenni [320-270 B.C]

4. Perumpoon chenni [270-245 B.C]

5. Uruva Paikhrer Ilamchetchenni [245-232 B.C]

6. Karikalan II [232-200 B.C]

7. Manakkilli [200-180 B.C]

8. Vel pahradakkai Peruviral Killi [180-160 B.C]

9. Pooravaikopp Perunarkkili [160-125 B.C]

10. Mudithalai Koperunarkkili [125-87 B.C]

11. Koperum Chozhan [87-62 B.C]

12. Otrumai Vetta Perunarkkili [62-40 B.C]

13. Chetchenni Nalankilli @ Maavalathan [40-22 B.C]

14. Kulamutrathu tunjiya Killivalavan [B.C22 - 1 A.D]
15. Kurapalli tunjiya Perum Thirumavalavan [1-40 A.D]
16. Neythalankanai Ilamchetchenni [40-60 A.D]
17. Karikalan III [60-110 A.D]
18. Maavan Killi [110-130 A.D]
19. Nedumudikkilli [130-150 A.D]
20. Chenganan [150-180 A.D]
21. Isai Ve ngilli 180-210 A.D]
22. Kaivankilli [210-240 A.D]
23. Polampoonkilli [240-260 A.D]
24. Kadumankilli [260-285 A.D]
25. Nalladi [285-330 A.D] known by Agananooru 356th poem
26. Chozha Rule in Andhra [300-400 A.D]

Dr.Mathivanan had undertaken a thankless job. We would urge Tamils all over the world to buy the book “Kadaikkazha Noolhalin Kaalamum Karuthum published by Thilagam Pathipagam 17 E, B-1, 12. K.K.Ponnurangam Salai, Omsakthinagar, Valasaravakkam, Chennai 600087 Tel: 044-24861007 or

contact the author at: rmvanan@gmail.com
Cell: 9962949787.

Basing the Tamil epic Perumkathai, a historical note is hidden in the poem 414 of Narkudi Vellalar Varalaru. It says in B.C 701 a Tamil King Udayanan defeated the Aryans and ruled North India. If he had continued to rule or if he had not succumbed to the submissive Aryan pretenders, The Gupta rule could not have come up, the appendix of the book states.

Well our scholars will fight like street dogs for centuries instead of fixing the period of Tamil epics or Tamil Kings.

It is within the genes of Tamils not to accept another Tamil as scholar. If a white skinned scholar tells all will fall in line. This mentality must go. Nothing wrong in debating but not debating beyond centuries.

In 1921 Maraimalai Adigal established that Tamils must follow Thiruvalluvar Calendar alone. But we still follow the Sanskritized Tamil Calendar. This is a curse on Tamils. We are for changing this mentality to usher in Tamil unity.

Let us hail the new dawn of Tamil unity. Let us join hands to reconstruct Tamil history.

TAMIL MUSIC THROUGH AGES

N.Nandhivarman

“In Western Music even today Piano holds a key position, they have not abandoned it. Equal temperamental scale is the basis for western music. It is a digital scale that enables them to deliver orchestral music. Unlike Tamils who gave up **Yazh**, westerners did not desert Piano. This is a lesson for Tamils. Similarly all the great Musicians like Beethoven, Mozart, Handel, Bach, Wagner and Brahms wrote hundreds of symphonies, and only in Beethoven’s tenth symphony vocal music finds place. Since in other symphonies there is no language, every country is eager to hear the music, language problem does not arise,” says P.T.R.Kamalai Thiagarajan in his book Isai Thamizhin Unmai Varalaru.

In Pondicherry Kalaimamani Arimalam Padmanaban opines that Tamil Music must spread to other parts of the globe. For this music sans language must be propagated or for Tamil musical notes we must select suitable poems in languages like English, French etc, so that we can spread the message that Tamil music belongs to the common heritage of mankind with greater antiquity than their cultures. Dr. Arimalam Padmanaban says that all western music could be adopted in sankaraparanam, nadabhairavi and keeravani, 3 musical notes of the South Indian Music. The earlier Tamil

names of these three notes are Arumpaalai, Padumalaipaalai and Pazham Panjuram (source: Silapathigaram) respectively. He surprises us by saying that at the Olympic closing ceremony old classic music of Chinese was sung which is similar to our *mohanam*. It was known as *Mullai pann* in Sangam age and later came to be known as *mohanam*. **Pann** in Tamil means raga and scale in English. Silapathigaram, the Tamil epic mentions about 11991 *panngal*, which is lost in the ravages of time. Scholars like Dr.Arimalam Padmanaban are working hard to redeem the lost musical heritage of Tamils, lost due to invasions and colonial rule.

Arimalam Padmanabhan who obtained his Doctorate from Pondicherry University is preparing a Dictionary of Tamil Music Literary Terms and he is also planning to do research in *Sopaana sangeetham*, which is famous in Kerala. He had written about “Therukoothil Isai” which speaks about the musical content of street theatre and is included in the Madras University syllabus as a lesson. His treatise on the Musical contents in Sankaradas swamigal’s Dramas deserves special mention. Sankaradas swamigal could be termed as Shakespeare of Tamil theatre. It is he who stands as an outstanding pioneer of Tamil theatre. Sankaradas swamigal (1867-1922) brought all musical streams into Tamil theatre. For instance a Christian missionary Edward Paul contacted Sankaradas swamigal and wanted him to write songs for western devotional songs. Swamigal not only obliged him, but through that exercise mastered the nuances of Western music and in his dramas

he wrote Tamil songs for western tunes says Arimalam Padmanaban in his research paper brought out in book form. “In carnatic music various forms of Hindustani crept into during the period of Gopalakrishna Bharathy in 19th century” says Arimalam Padmanaban, thereby analyzing the influences, its origins, admixture of musical forms with precision.

Sankaradas swamigal wrote 68 dramas, and if Padmanaban had not laboured hard to trace all this for his research quest the complete list would not be available to others. Sankaradas swamigal in his last days spent his life in Pondicherry and breathed his last here on 13th November 1922.

There is a memorial here in the graveyard at Karuvadikuppam Pondicherry where Government of Pondicherry every year celebrates the anniversary of swamigal. Swamigal simplified the classical music and brought it nearer to the common masses. In the history of Tamil music this marks a turning point.

Delving deep into the emergence and uniqueness of Swamigal, Arimalam Padmanaban says that “Gopalakrishna Bharathiar wrote *Nandan sarithra keerthanaigal*, which marked the revival of the Tamil musical tradition. Following his footsteps Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiar used the same musical notes of Gopalakrishna Bharathiar and wrote songs.

Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar brought Tirupavai and Tiruvembai into the Tamil musical usage. Bharathidasan in order to

spread Tamil music with help of Telugu scholars translated Thiyagarajas keerthanaihal into Tamil. For instance Thigaraja's *sani thodi deve o manasa* in **arikambothi raga** was rendered into Tamil by Bharathidasan as *thathi kooti vaaray o maname.*"

By such narrations Arimalam points out the cultural exchanges that has taken place and the blending of various musical traditions that run like streams of the same river called humanist culture.

Courtesy: 12th February 2005 New Indian Express

PALLAVA ICONOLOGY

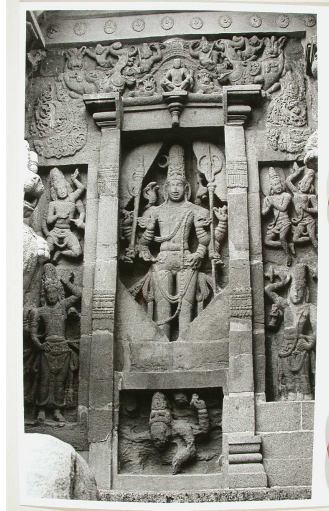
A STUDY

N.Nandhivarman

The Ecole Francaise D'Extreme Orient [EFEEO] is a place where silently lot of research is done but it is all in French. "To know about all Saiva agamas one had to go to Paris University which had done extensive and intensive

research", says

Dr.Vijayavenugopal of the Epigraphy section of this French Institute." There are lots of Tamil scholars knowing French, but they don't translate all these researches into Tamil. This result he says. As I frequent this institute I found the photographers



Ravindran and Ramasamy Babu equally knowledgeable on all Temple Art of Tamil Nadu. They were showing in computer screen a pillar with a sculpture, and a young French lady immediately said it is from Kailasanatha temple of Kanchipuram. I was dumbfounded. Most Tamils may have visited temples, but just by seeing a sculpture they won't be in a position to recapture its identity and history.

[The narrative panel of Lord Lingodbhavar at Kailasanathar temple in Kanchipuram]

I got introduced and enquired about her mission. She is Valerie from Paris University who had come all the way from France and had stayed here at Pondicherry for 8 months. Miss Valerie is doing her PhD on Pallava iconography under the guidance of Ms.Nalini Balbir who works at University of Paris. Ms.Nalini Balbir, her Professor is specializing in Jainism. She had sent her two students to stay in Pondicherry to undertake researches. That is how Valerie, a French girl had come here. Another Srilankan Tamil girl Udaya Velupillai is doing research on Sirkazhi temple. It is needless to say that Mr.Jean Deloche took 6 years to do a research on Gingee. The time taken, efforts put in to make a research and the dedication of these scholars makes them excel in their findings. In another rare feat to the team of scholars is that the 11,000 manuscripts collected meticulously and preserved by EFEO Pondicherry had been declared last week as world heritage having been accepted by UNESCO.

Miss Valerie says that the “Pallavas invented new iconography in 7 to 8 th centuries, which never existed before. According to Miss. Valerie it is the beginning of South Indian iconography. Of particular mention is that of Saivite iconography for which no parallels are found in the North India. But when it comes to Vaishnavite iconography we find similar evidences in North India. The best of Pallava iconography belongs to the period of Rajasimha Pallaveshwaran. Kailasanatha

temple of Kanchipuram is a temple with very rich evidences of art”.

The idol of Lingodbhavar at Kailasanathar Temple Kanchipuram may appear to be depicting a myth about ego clashes between Hindu pantheons of gods. It shows Lord Shiva coming out of Lingam and Lord Vishnu in **Varaga** form digging the Earth to trace his feet. Lord Brahma assumes the bird form of **“annaparavai”**.

And goes to find Lord Shiva’s head. In midway he returns with failure, whereas the efforts to reach his foot also did not bear fruit. Explaining the inner meaning of this myth it is said Brahma denotes mental power and Vishnu physical power. The message of the sculpture is that you can’t reach god by either mental power or physical power. This narrative panel of mythology is a remarkable piece of Pallava art.

A picture or sculpture is worth a thousand words. Iconography is the traditional art of portraying figures in pigment that symbolically mean more than a simple depiction of the person involved. Icons have been used by different religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. “In the case of the various Hindu gods almost everything is considered symbolism. The figures are blue-skinned (the color of heaven) with multiple arms holding various symbols depicting aspects of the god (the drums of change, the flower of new life, the fire of destruction, etc.). The many heads, eyes, feet, and arms do not have to be taken literally”

opined a scholar. Iconography had grown into a new science called iconology. Nowadays study is devoted to all hidden aspects and meanings with the origins of such art forms, hence new name of iconology gained currency.

Soviet scholar Sergei Tokorav in his History of Religion writes “The cult of cross has nothing to do with the supposed instrument used for Christ’s execution. The Romans did in fact crucify people on crosses but they were in the form of letter “**T**”. The Christian cross was extremely an ancient symbol that can be found in Egyptian, Cretan and other art work. Its origin is hard to establish, but it is certain that cult of cross had nothing to do with the legend of the crucifixion of Christ”.

As in West in India too nowadays scholars are looking for hidden meaning and roots of various symbols in the art. The snake on Lord Shiva denotes the Snake cult of the early Naga society. There is a debate among scholars about the origins of Saivism. One school claims it emerged from the lost continent of Lemuria. Other school argues that it came from Kashmiri Saivism.

Near Baroda there is a place called Karom, which is shortened form of **Kayaroganam**. It is from this place, a sect of Saivism **Kayaroganam** emerged. In Tamil Nadu Nagapattinam is called *Thirunagai Kayaroganam*., indicating the spread of that sect here. **Kaya aroganam**, indicates we have to reach upwards to God. **Kaya avaroganam** means God descending to Earth. These two sects of Saivism differ on this point. From this

sect the musical term **aroganam** and **avaroganam** came, says Dr.Vijayavenugopal. There is also an opinion that Chola emperor Rajarajan brought pasupatham sect of Saivism from North.

All these researches done in French will help Miss Valerie get a doctorate from Paris University. She refuses to talk about her research thesis, which is justifiable. But after this thesis is submitted until it gets translated in English and Tamil, people of Pondicherry or Tamil Nadu will have to remain in dark about its content. The time difference will result in Tamil scholars lagging behind in updated knowledge on iconology.

Courtesy: 2nd July 2005: New Indian Express

GRANDEUR OF SENJI

N.Nandhivarman

“The Travels of Father Pimenta in 1597” led him to Senji, the Fort town in Tamil Nadu 60 kms away from Pondicherry coast. “Oh! It is bigger than any city in Portugal, except that of Lisbon” he exclaimed. Kindt in 1614 on his visit admitted that Senji is as large as Amsterdam. Jean Deloche, the noted historian from the Ecole Francaise D’Extreme Orient of Pondicherry frequented Senji for 6 long years to do research and in his valuable French treatise “Senji Ville Fortifie’e du pays Tamoul (2000)” says, “Senji, immortalized by Desingh’s ballad, still popular in South India, is a significant place in the Tamil country. Successively occupied by the Hindus of Vijayanagar, the Nayaks, the Muslims of Bijapur, the Marathas, the Mughals and finally by the French in 1750, it was, at the end of the sixteenth century, one of the biggest cities of the peninsula.”

C.S.Srinivasachari in his “History of Gingee and its Rulers” (1943) narrates the ground situation thus “It is a melancholy reflection for the historian, that what was once a scene of bustling animation, the dazzling military pomp, can boast at present of only few humble habitations, with a handful of peaceful agriculturalists. Where once chargers pranced in martial array, the bullocks drag the plough share, goaded by a half naked farmer and the spider weaves its web where

rulers once sat in state and administered the affairs of the realm.”

The Fort may be in ruins, the town may have lost its grandeur, but among the ruler's only one name and that too of a young boy hailing in a family that came all the way from Bundhelkand to rule a Tamil territory has been adored for his valour and folklore made his name immortal in people's memory. Yes it is Raja Desingh who flashes in our mind whenever we think of Senji. M.G.Ramachandran played the role of Raja Desingh in a Tamil movie, but his fans could not digest the death of the hero and the film failed at box office. But in real life the memory of Raja Desingh is “preserved even to this day in every town and village of South India. The wandering minstrel sings to groups of villagers under the banyan tree of the heroism of Raja Desingh of how he loved and fought and fell,” says C.S.Srinivasachari.

The Moghul Monarch Aurengazeb made a chieftain from Bundhelkand, Swarup Singh, the ruler of Senji in 1700 A.D. Swarup Singh passed away in his old age in Senji in 1714 A.D. Hearing his death, the son of Swarup Singh, Desingh started from Bundhelkand towards Senji. At that juncture he would never have dreamt that the journey to immortality had started. Since a firman had been granted by Aurengazeb in his father's favour by way of hereditary right Desingh took up formal possession of the jaghir. The Nawab of Arcot Sadatullah Khan was aghast at this assumption of office, since Swarup Singh was a defaulter to the tune of 70 lakhs for a

prolonged period of a decade. This contentious issue led to an uneven war. Nawab Sadatullah Khan's army comprising 8000 horsemen and 10,000 soldiers marched to capture Senji. Raja Desingh had only 350 horses and 500 troopers but he could not be cowed down by brutal force. He stood up against a mighty army and fought till last breath. His queen immolated herself in the funeral pyre. Thus a young Rajput of 22 years old got a unique place in the history of Senji, a fort of many a siege and wars.

Now while researches are undertaken the amazing facts about Senji are emerging slowly. "This site is particularly interesting for a student of military architecture, because it is the only one in India where a full sequence of the defense systems used in the subcontinent, from the Vijayanagar period to the European conquest, can be observed. It is also the only one where we can follow, for at least four centuries, the adaptation of the defense to the progress of artillery" That is how Professor Jean Deloche of the Ecole Francaise D'Extreme Orient describes in his French book *Senji (gingi) Ville fortifie'e du pays Tamoul* published in 2000 with 40 line drawings and 334 photographs. This book is the only one of its kind and we have to wait for another six months to see its English version in print.

In his researches Jean Deloche is stunned by "the deep knowledge of water management, a noteworthy engineering skill and boldness of enterprise. Water is made available throughout the year because it is stored in the weathered granite mass, acting as sponge or a filter and reappears as springs in natural

reservoirs called “sunai”. On the six fortified hills, all depressions, cavities, anfractuositities, deep fissures, fractures, where water could be stored have this way been used. Moreover they were systematically enlarged by addition of a brick wall “This impregnable fortress had fallen in alien hands and such defeats are made a post mortem by a French scholar Bourdot in his book “18 th Century Pondicherry.” “It was a revolt amongst the besieged that opened the gates to Bijapur’s army. It was an act of treason that enabled the Maharatta Shivaji to take possession of it in 1677. Without the help of corruption the place would never had fallen to the Moghul power twenty years later. Lastly it is doubtful whether Bussy with his 200 men would have been able to succeed in just few hours, with a raid that resulted in the surrender of the garrison, had it not been the panic and terror that could overcome the most courageous of the defenders during a night attack contrary to all rules especially that night was without moon or stars and when the assailants are yelling demoniacally in an unknown tongue”. M.Bourdat deserves due applauses for placing these truths in the pages of history to set the record straight.

Jain Saints had dwelled in the hills of Gingee from 2 nd century to 6 th century, as evident by many stone carvings and other evidences of being citadel of Jainism. Gingee was under Pallava Emperors between 600 to 900 AD. Chozha Emperors ruled Gingee between 900 to 1103 AD. In the stone epigraphs at Aanangur of Athitya Chozhan (871-907) and of Athiya Chozhan II (985-1013) it becomes

crystal clear that Chozha Emperors ruled Gingee. Pandya Emperors, Chozha Rulers and Hoysala Kings ruled between 1014 to 1190 AD. Yadhava kings ruled Gingee between 1190 to 1330 AD. It came under Vijayanagar rule from the fag end of 14 th century and for 150 years it was under Vijayanagar rule. It saw the rule of Bijapur Sultans between 1649-1677 AD. Maharastrians ruled from 1677-1697. Moguls were in power from 1700-1750 AD. It slipped between British and French rule from 1750. This is in nutshell the historical imprints left on Gingee, and for such a Fort which has a history dating back to 1800 years if proper publicity is made in abroad it will definitely attract world tourists. It also needs the help of world agencies that protect heritage to improve its infrastructure and other amenities.

The Fort at Gingee declared as National Monument from 1921 is under the Archeological Department. Its history and the archeological finds in its vicinity must be publicized to promote archeological and historical tourism. But no steps are afoot in governmental promotion of archeological and historical tourism. It is a miracle that a Fort that has seen many a battle is still there for everyone to see. The Collector of South Arcot recommended to the Board of Revenue in 1803 to demolish the Gingee Fort fearing it may fall into the hands of French. Around 1850 again someone wanted to convert Gingee Fort into a depot for storage of salt. . Fortunately these suggestions were not carried out. We have a living monument, a marvel which should be utilized properl in the Tourism market.Courtesy: Deccan Chronicle

THE GINGEE FORT: A STORY OF VALOUR

N.Nandhivarman

The silent revolution by French institutions in Pondicherry is not being noticed with requisite interest. Professor M.Bourdat of Lycee Francaise in his book 18 th Century Pondicherry published in 1992 writes about Inland Forts, but fortunately the task to write about Senji (Gingee) falls on the shoulders of Jean Deloche of the Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient and he had produced a monumental work in his mother tongue French entitled "Senji (Gingi) Ville fortifie'e du pays Tamoul". By next year English version of this book is going to appear. Then it will take decades to see it in Tamil. To know about the history of a Fort situated in Tamil Nadu, more than the Universities and Research Institutions here the, French institute called Ecole Francaise D'Extreme Orient had been rendering valuable services, which must be lauded with deep sense of gratitude. The archeological excavations of Arikamedu brought out in a book by Vimala Begley and titled "The Ancient Port of Arikamedu Vol I" is yet to be translated into Tamil. Now the French book on Senji by this institute must awaken Indian Research institutions to keep pace and bring both books in Tamil for the benefit of Tamil speaking people.

Far away from Pondicherry the entrance of the Gingee Fort has got a Pondicherry Gate. Similarly Pondicherry has a Gingee Salai, road that leads to Gingee. Why So? It denotes the

inseparable historical connectivity between these two places. French captured Gingee and it remained with the French for almost a decade. The battle for Gingee is vividly portrayed in volume XV of the "Lettres edifiantes et curieuses" written by a Jesuit priest Father Lavour. "On September 11, 1750 Bussy and d'Auteuil arrived at the scene of battle towards 7 o'clock in the evening. While the besieged opened fire in un-coordinated fashion French artillery contained them within their cover. When the moon had set, a detachment under the command of three officers scaled the hill of Rajagiri. It is not known how these men were able to clear the deep breach with its drawbridge, which defended the topmost boulder, an enormous natural donjon. Then towards 4 o'clock in the morning, a loud cry was heard coming from the top of one of the mountains. "Vive Le Roll". It was Mm de Saint Georges, Veri and Le Normand who, followed by their troops had carried out the order they had been given. The attack then became general. M d' Fauteuil had the gate of the citadel blown up. Terror spread amongst the defending Moors who fired weekly several times and then fled. In less than an hour one had become master of all." This how French conquest of Gingee is recorded.

Many have conquered and many have ruled Gingee but a young man known for his bravery is still the hero of Gingee, that too after getting killed in a war. Yes, this brave man Desingh at the age of 22 with just 500 troopers and 350 horses faced an army of 8000 horsemen and 10,000 soldiers. The result he lost his life, his wife got immolated in his funeral pyre. But he lives in history and

peoples memory. Raja Desingh, the film where MGRamachandiran played Raja Desingh was not well received by the audience because the fans of MGR did not relish the thought of hero dying in a war. But the real hero Raja Desingh is a hero living in folklore, ballads and peoples memory. The difference in these battles is while French recorded the history of the battle, Tamils wrote folk songs adding their imaginative skills, and that is why historians dismiss these literary evidences unless corroborated with archaeological and other findings. A question arises to every ones mind. How could a fort that produced the heroic Desingh in later days fall so easily to French? The answer is found in a book of a French scholar who is true to his quest towards truth.

This impregnable fortress had fallen in alien hands and such defeats are made a post mortem by a French scholar Bourdot in his book "18 th Century Pondicherry." "It was a revolt amongst the besieged that opened the gates to Bijapur's army. It was an act of treason that enabled the Maharatta Shivaji to take possession of it in 1677. Without the help of corruption the place would never had fallen to the Moghul power twenty years later. Lastly it is doubtful whether Bussy with his 200 men would have been able to succeed in just few hours, with a raid that resulted in the surrender of the garrison, had it not been the panic and terror that could overcome the most courageous of the defenders during a night attack contrary to all rules especially that night was without moon or stars and when the assailants are yelling demoniacally in an unknown tongue". M.Bourdat deserves due

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As an authority on Gingee Professor Jean Deloche describes with passion “ the technological skills shown in water management and also in the art of war after the invention of gunpowder.”

Professor Jean Deloche elaborates the military architecture angle too with vivid details. According to him, during the rule of Vijayanagar Governors “the construction was based on quadrangular works. Curtain walls were made of segments forming salient angles, flanked by square or rectangular towers. Stonewalls were made of earth and rubble filling, with wedge shaped stone blocks and no mortar in joints except in battlement of stone or brick. Gateways consisted of two rectangular platforms separated by a central passageway. This is the old system of fortification.”

Talking to us enthusiastically the Professor is at his best spirit while he narrates about the profound changes brought by Nayaks in their almost 100 year rule “ in the art of defense, a consequence of the introduction of gun powder into warfare and the development of powerful artillery. It is based on circular and semi circular works, which by establishing a flanking fire, remedied the defects of former constructions. It started with the reshaping of some of the old walls and battlements. Embankments of earth were given a facing of masonry and towers were rounded in the lower fort, almond shaped merlons replaced the older ones”

“The big innovation of the period is the construction of the first enclosure, with semi circular towers, surrounding Krishnagiri and extending to the eastern cliff of Chandrayandurgam, linking the three hills, in the form of a triangle. With extensive use of explosive projectiles and the development of siege artillery, the other mountains

Kurangudurgam and Kusumalai were also fortified in the same way, as well as the south west spur of Chandrayanmdurgam, since then called Sakkilidurgam”.

“A new defensive system was adopted to protect the gateways. Moreover cavaliers or round structures were raised behind the towers to lend support and provide firing platforms for artillery” This architectural marvel from military point of view and from the general view found expression in the best water management plan of a fort blended together had created a uniqueness and hence Jean Deloche describes that it

The Fort at Gingee declared as National Monument from 1921 is under the Archeological Department. Its history and the archeological finds in its vicinity must be publicized to promote archeological and historical tourism. French scholar Jean Deloche and his publications though are known to scholars must be taken to the common man and Government of India must suitably honour him. But no steps are afoot in governmental promotion of archeological and historical tourism. An Engineer by profession R.Mani had been tirelessly giving a helping hand in preparation of maps and repairs of forts including Gingee fort. He has also penned a book in Tamil “Varalatril Gingee. This is just a candle while we have to illuminate Gingee’s history with 1000 lights.

Courtesy: September 25 of 2004 New Indian Express

THE DUTCH CONNECTIONS (1693-1699)

N.Nandhivarman

The French connection Pondicherry has is known to one and all but not its Dutch connections. On September 7, 1693 Pondicherry fell into the hands of the Dutch and remained five and half years in their possession until March 1699. It is common knowledge that Pondicherry near the beach area after Grand Canal in the east is known as white town and the west of Grand Canal is called as black town. French are not responsible for this divide on racial lines. The Dutch wanted to carve out a white area exclusively for themselves. They wanted to relocate Indian people from the white town area. "It is also beyond doubt that in their project to relocate the Indian community in a separate area to the west of the establishment and keeping the old town on the seashore for themselves, the Dutch are also at the origin of the separation between Ville Noire i.e. white town and Ville Blanche i.e. black town" opines Professor Jean Deloche of the Institute Francaise de Pondicherry.

During that period Dutch tried to develop the Pondicherry into a great manufacturing center. By entering into an agreement with Raja Ram, the ruler of Senji, they enlarged the territory under their control. Then they planned a new town based on the grid pattern. Jacob Verbergmoes, the land surveyor worked out a great urban project for the Dutch... "The Dutch did not alter the layout of the old town

i.e. the fort area to the east of the marshy depression. They kept the rough fence bordering the northern and southern part. They did not modify the fort and its outer works; on the contrary they even repaired the breaches made in the walls and the damage done to the bastions. They did not demolish the Malabar church for the native Christians or the French storehouses and the godowns but they decided not to rebuild the blocks of stone houses to the East of the Fort which had been destroyed by Francois Martin during the siege. The streets therefore had the same alignments. On the Western side on the other hand they completely changed the structure of the town. First they seized the properties of the French company and the religious orders, particularly the gardens”

In fact, the Dutch plans of Pondicherry preserved at the National Archives at The Hague show that the orthogonal street pattern of the town is a creation of the Dutch. The plans of 1693 show that, in Francois Martin’s time, the streets or lanes were following an irregular pattern, without any shape or symmetry, whereas in the plans drafted in 1694, during the Dutch occupation, one finds the design of a large new town, with a very regular geometric lay out, rectangular blocks of houses, separated by straight streets, intersecting at right angles. This great urban project of the Dutch company was adopted by the French who systematically carried out the extensive straightening out of streets into a planned grid, during the first half of the 18 th century” This is how Jean Deloche summarizes the contents of his book published in 2004 with 11 figures and 6

plates. “Origins of the Urban Development of Pondicherry according to 17 th Century Dutch Plans” is a masterpiece placing truth in its right place. People must appreciate the French Institution here and the French author who did not falter in placing truth above all.

The Dutch evidences had thrown more light on the History of Pondicherry’s Urban Development. The Plan of the fortress and town “Poedechery” as it is currently being built on 20 th November 1694, available with Dutch Museum not only gives authentic version of the scene of those days but also spells Pudhucherri, the correct Tamil name instead of the corrupted version of Pondicherry.

In his book “City Planning and Architecture in Pondicherry” P.Pichard thinks that the French adapted “their plan to the natural conditions of the littoral. This was possible because of the straight coast line was a very strong feature of the site and has from the beginning, determined the general orientation of the buildings and the direction of the streets, behind the dune, the low marshy lands and their outlet, running parallel to the seashore, increased this trend.”

Ron van Oers is of the opinion that Dutch colonial settlements were built on a “Strict geometrical design to subdivide the usable area into building plots. All had a common image of being neat and well organized.” On the orthogonal street model applied in Pondicherry he says “Dutch preferred this pattern since it was symbolic of an ordered, well managed society, hierarchical but

democratic, it was emblematic for the hard working god fearing Dutch Calvinists”

“French appropriated this great design and that the extensive straightening out of the streets into a planned grid, systematically carried out by their governors in the first half of the 18th century, was therefore the extension of the existing Dutch orthogonal pattern into the rest of the town.” Says Historian Jean Deloche who lives in Pondicherry. A great scholar who loves Tamil lives here unknown to fellow Tamils and he humbly refuses to get photographed because he wants his works to speak for ages to come.

Courtesy:13th November 2004 New Indian Express

THE TAMILS OF REUNION AND THEIR HYBRID CULTURE

Colonialism cannot be condemned outright. This may sound outrageous. But colonialism in a way introduced the concept of outsourcing attempted in the bygone centuries and currently being debated in the free market era. In a world where free market dominates, the sweat and toils of the slave labourers may be forgotten, but we must realize that in their sufferings the foundations for global market economy is sown. ReUnion is a typical example of outsourcing by the French East India Company, and its history reveals how an hybrid culture emanated amidst Tamil settlers there, who are Tamils but could not speak Tamil, their mother tongue lost in the interregnum of 5 generations of separation from their homeland namely Pondicherry.

The archipelago, comprised of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Réunion, was christened the Mascarenes by Portuguese navigator Pedro de Mascarenhas, following its European discovery in 1512. In 1642 the French settled in the island when La Compagnie des Indes Orientales (the French East India Company) sent its ship, the *St-Louis*, and the King of France named it Île Bourbon. Much water had flown in the five rivers that irrigate this tiny island since then. Today a brief note about this island is given in a separate box.

Full country name: Department of Réunion
 governed by France
 Area:2,510sq.km
 Population:720,934
 CapitalCity:St-Denis(population145,000)
 People:French,African,Malagasy,Chinese,Tamil
 Language:French,
 Religion:RomanCatholic,Hindu,Islam,Buddhist
 Government:OverseasdepartmentofFrance
 HeadofState:PresidentofFranceJacquesChirac
 Head of Government: Prime Minister of
 France Jean-Pierre Raffarin

 GDP: US\$3.4billion
 GDPpercapita: US\$4,800
 AnnualGrowth: 3.8%
 Major Industries: Sugar, rum, cigarettes,
 handicraft items, flower oil.
 Major Trading Partners: France, Japan,
 Comoros, Bahrain, and Italy.

The French Revolution is a turning point in its history. The greatest achievement of the 1848 revolution for the colonies was the abolition of slavery. Slavery, the foundation of economic life in Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana and Reunion, had been abolished by the Convention in 1794 but was re-instituted by Napoleon. National Assembly by way of definitive decree on April 27, 1848 declared that 'slavery is an attack on human dignity', it 'destroys the principal of natural law and duty . . . it is a flagrant violation of republican dogma," and that great unrest could erupt in the colonies if slavery were not ended, the law abolished slavery in all French colonies and

possessions. Thus a total of 262,564 slaves were thereby freed, most of them in the plantation colonies of the West Indies and Réunion.

But with this abolition of slave labour the need to fill that vacuum arose and plantation owners looked for French India to compensate the loss of slave labour. Thus lot of Tamils found their way to the island of Reunion situated in the Indian Ocean closer to Madagascar. Lot of people from Pondicherry and its surrounds went to the coffee and other plantations in Reunion as labour.

The coffee plantations were destroyed often destroyed by cyclones and the Tamil labour had to struggle hard facing the fury of Nature. Napoleon Bonaparte lost the island to the British for a short break of five years. Under British rule, sugar cane was introduced to Réunion and quickly supplanted food production as the primary crop. It resulted in the dispossession of many small farmers who were forced to sell out to those with capital to invest in the new monoculture. The supplanted farmers migrated to the interior to find land and carry on with their agricultural activities. During this period, the Desbassyns brothers rose to success as the island's foremost sugar barons. The vanilla industry, introduced in 1819, also grew rapidly. The golden age of trade and development in Réunion lasted until 1870, when competition from Cuba and the European sugar beet industry, combined with the opening of the Suez Canal, resulted in an economic slump. Shipping decreased, the sugar industry

declined and land and capital were further concentrated in the hands of a small French elite. Close on the cessation of hostilities in First World War global demand for sugar increased. This helped Reunion's economy out of the doldrums. But during World War II, an economic blockade once again crippled the island's economy. A colony under French law must provide to the French mainland goods of greater value than the amount of money allocated to it. A colony had to be profitable. This obligation was lifted in 1946, when Réunion's status changed from colony to overseas department, a change in status intended to provide the island with the benefits of social and political equality with the mainland. The island still falls under the jurisdiction of the French government.

It cannot be said that Catholic faith dominates the island's religious character. It is visible in the shrines along every highway and byway, in caves, on cliff tops and in the many saint's days and holidays. St-Denis shuts down on Sunday, when half the city goes to the beach. Hindus and Muslims follow their respective religions freely and most large towns have both a mosque and a temple. Popular Hindu rites include *teemeedee*, which involves fire walking, and *cavadee*, involving piercing one's cheeks with silver needles, often take place. A great deal of syncretism with Catholicism has evolved over the years, and vice versa. Thus a hybrid religion had come into existence. People celebrating all festivals and worshipping all deities have produced a hybrid religion of tolerance. Lot of Hindu Temples is

there for Lord Shiva, Lord Muruga and Goddess Kaali.

French is the official language, but Créole is the most widely spoken. Few people speak English. Réunion Créole is even beyond most French people. A word, which means one thing in French, can mean something completely different in Créole. But the island which has around 4 lakh Tamils who own Tamil names and celebrate Hindu festivals, yet unable to speak Tamil. The Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Navalar Nedunchezian participated in a world Tamil Cultural Movements conference in neighboring Mauritius and visited Reunion too. During this visit the Reunion Tamil Kazhagam seeking the help of Tamil Nadu Government to teach Tamil to the people of Reunion and to promote cultural exchanges with mainland Tamils put up demands. It remains still and unfulfilled dream. People in a distant place do not haunt our memory as we have other chores to attend in everyday life. But the Government of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry must open Cultural Exchange Centers in all these isolate islands, and like the Alliance Française that keeps teaching French throughout world, institutionalized teaching of Tamil and spreading the tenets of Tamil Culture must be undertaken, all who visit islands like Reunion will have these thoughts linger in their minds.

The Maha Bhadrakaliaaman Temple authorities and the Natha Musical Academy of Reunion have invited the students of TamilNadu Government Music College to

provide them some insights into Tamil folk arts. Professor M.Anbarasan who teaches folk arts in the College of Music who heads the team comprising his students Miss K.Kala, Miss.K.Vijayalaxmi, Miss.N.Selvarani, Miss.Santhi and Mr.Nallusamy will be participating in various functions in Reunion as depicted in this poster. These ambassadors of Tamil culture carry forward the message of goodwill from the people of Tamil Nadu, and whole Reunion Tamils must be reassured that in upholding Tamil customs, religious practices, arts, music and language, a day will come that Reunion cultural ambassadors arrive here and capture our attention and can win our admiration. Where there is a will, there will be a way, goes the saying. Reunion Tamils have the will. Let them cherish their hybrid culture with Tamil component; we all hope and wish so.

N.Nandhivarman

Courtesy: New Indian Express 14.4.2004

STONE INSCRIPTIONS SPEAK

N.Nandhivarman

Monuments, Inscriptions and copper plates speak. They reveal the past. Epigraphists unearth history hidden in these. There are around 535 stone inscriptions found out till date which includes Sanskrit (4), Kannada (2), Latin (1), French (2), Armenian (1) and most of the ones in Tamil. Late Pulavar Kuppusamy and Villianur Venkatesan did the compiling of these epigraphs. Professor Vijayavenugopal Senior Research Fellow of the Epigraphy Section of Ecole Francaise D' Extreme-Orient of Pondicherry had translated these and a new book is on the anvil.

For more than 1000 years of our history could be traced in these stone inscriptions. The rule of Rastrakooda king Kannaradevan comes to light through 16 inscriptions. Similarly sixteen Chozha Emperors have ruled Pondicherry region, which is recorded in 220 inscriptions. Eight Pandyan kings (18), Two later Pallavas (13), Thirteen Vijayanagara Kings (27) and under Sambuvaraiyer (3) are the break up of the total 535 stone inscriptions found in and around Pondicherry.

Almost all major villages of Pondicherry and Karaikal regions have these inscriptions namely Thirubuvanai (188), Madagadipattu (83), Thirunallaru (51), Villianur (50), Thiruvandarkoil (42), Bahour (45), Pondicherry (30). In Karaikal region at Karaikal (10), Thirumalairayanpattinam (6), Nallambal (7), Mathur (1), Nedungadu (1),

Sethur (3), Sorakudi (1), Melponsethi (1)
Pandasozhanur (7), Thirukanji (3),
Kariamaniccam (2), Keezhkasakudi (2),
Melkasakudi (1) and Dharmapuram (1).

Coming to recent past a monument of a brave soldier reminds us about the year 1778 when Pondicherry was under siege by the British. The brave sons of Pondicherry with only 1000 soldiers defended their soil fiercely against the 24,000 attackers. An isolated commemorative stele of a brave Englishman Captain Aug de Morgan killed by the French artillery on 11 th October 1778 stands on a barren terrain near Jipmer Hospital. This monument reminds us of not only the bravery of Pondicherrians but also their nobility to pay due respects even to the enemy warrior.

Another Tomb of Pauline de Kerjean nephew of Dupliex, a little girl who served in the Deccan wars epitomizes brave French womanhood." The skulls, bats and tibia are symbols more sinister than comforting flames that represent the eternal soul," writes M.Bourdat, Professor of Literature in Lycee Francaise.

The Annual Reports of Indian Epigraphy 1887-1905 is the first of its kind in Indian subcontinent on listing out the various stone inscriptions. J.Burges, the Director General of Archaeological Survey of India and E.Holtzsch, the Epigraphist of the Archaeological Survey of South India are the pioneers who laid down the foundation for epigraphic studies. In French India at the same time French scholars have unearthed many stone inscriptions. Jouveau Dubaille found a stone

monument in the garden in front of present day Raj Niwas which speaks about the fortifications on the shore together with “Port Marine” built by Joseph Franoise Dupleix, the Governor of Pondicherry.

While these speak about recent history stone inscriptions are useful to know how this area was ruled. Though 535 epigraphs speak about various rulers at most of the period Pondicherry was part and parcel of Nadu Nadu, which means middle country. There are historical reasons for this region to be called as Nadu Nadu. The Pallava rule did not extend up to Pennaiyaaru and Chozha rule was up to Vellaru. In between these around 10 small states were there such as Vanagoppadi, Singapuranaadu, Oymanaadu, Vesalipadinadu etc. These areas ruled by small states were called Nadunadu. The Saivite book of hymns Thevaram calls the pilgrimage centers in this region as Nadu Naattu thirupathigal.

From these inscriptions we understand how the territory was divided into Mandalam, Kottam, and Kootram similar to District, Taluk and Panchayat. The subdivisions for purpose of revenue have been divided into 28 valanaadugal. Athiraja valanaadu was named after Rajathirajan I. This comes to public notice while epigraphists found this inscription at Tirunallar which belonged to the regime of Rajendra II.

The book by the Ecole Francaise D’Extreme Orient had generated lot of interest among public, as they were hoping that this book will throw more light on how this region was ruled and what were the social customs prevailing

during that period etc. For instance in one inscription dating back to 1000 years in Bahur the word untouchable (Theendathagar) is used, wherein the tank desalting work was forbidden to untouchables since that water reaches the deity. That may be the first instance of that word being used, scholars opine.

Anyhow stones reflect the societal practices of those days be it good or bad. A true historical perspective emerges, and Pondicherrians come to understand their region more with scholars throwing more light.

[Courtesy: New Indian Express dated: 16th April 2005]

MARCHING AHEAD IN TAMIL-BASED COMPUTING

N.Nandhivarman

“The blending of the language and software disciplines led to the emergence of new areas like ‘Language Engineering’, ‘Internationalization and Localization’ and ‘Tamil-based Computing’ says S.Kuppuswami Dean of the Ramanujam School of Mathematics and Computer Sciences of Pondicherry University. The Government of India had declared Tamil as classical language and the evolution in computer technology with increased applications necessitated the adaptation of Tamil in computers. Internet is a mostly used by English knowing peoples in view of the content and presentation being in English. Since Internet has to reach more people the need of the hour is Tamil-based computing. “The unique and unparalleled role of two academicians of Pondicherry University in Tamil based computing has not been recognized by Tamil scholars” opined President of Anna Foundation C.P.Thirunavukarasu former M.P

S.Kuppuswami and V.Prasanna Venkatesan of Pondicherry University developed a prototype of Tamil Computer in the year 1996. Having this prototype as base Government of Tamilnadu had taken initiatives on standardization of keyboard, coding schemes and technical words for realizing the Tamil Computer and constituted a committee .The committee broadly divided the issues related

to Tamil Computer into language and computer based issues. The language-based issues mainly focuses on the language to be adopted in computer and the changes in the language elements like character composition, character set, grammar etc. It was decided that there was no change required in the character set and composition. Standardizing the Tamil grammar is still a progressing work.

“The next one is the computer system related issues like keyboard layouts, character coding scheme, domain naming etc. In order to work with different Tamil software, the users have to learn different keyboard layouts and complicate the keying-in process. This is due to the non-availability of standard Tamil keyboard layout. In order to select and standardize a Tamil keyboard layout, the committee decided to categorize the existing Tamil keyboard layouts and analyze them. Tamil keyboard layouts proposed by the various software developers and researchers have been collected and categorized into four groups” explains V.Prasanna Venkatesan.

Keyboard layouts based on the phonemes and frequencies of usage of Tamil characters are classified as Phonetic keyboard layouts. Layouts which follow the Tamil typewriter keyboard are classified as Typewriter-like keyboard layouts. In Romanized keyboard layouts mapping of the Tamil characters to the corresponding English characters is done on transliteration basis. The keyboard layouts which do not fall under the above categories are grouped as others.

An extensive analysis was carried out in three phases on the Tamil keyboard layouts to determine their efficiency for keying-in of Tamil texts selected from various Tamil literatures of different periods. S.Kuppuswami and V.Prasanna Venkatesan have jointly developed benchmarking software to analyze the Tamil keyboard layouts and recommended the results to Government of Tamilnadu, which led to steps being taken for release of the standardized Tamil keyboard layout for Tamil software development.

The UNICODE consortium did standardizing the character-coding scheme but it was commented for the limitations. To overcome this hurdle the duo designed a coding scheme for Tamil based on sorting, storage, and memory and performance constraints. In addition jointly they have developed much Tamil software for the Tamil usage and users. While two scholars from Pondicherry University have shown the way to Tamil computing there is little interaction between them and Tamil scholars of Pondicherry.

But at the same time Pondicherry's Tamil scholars are realizing that they should not be left behind and recently an effort is being made to introduce them to netizens. And in the forefront of this endeavor is Rasa. Thiagarasan. While the print media nowadays is promoting modern verse an Ezine launched before ten months from Pondicherry had encouraged Tamil writers to compose poems strictly following the grammatical rules and meter. "Since Marabu kavithaigal have become a rare species we decided to promote and preserve them in net world" says, Rasa

Thiagarajan editor of the Tamil ezine Pudhucherry that can be viewed at www.pudhucherry.com.

Entirely new breeds of writers have come up in the net world. They started in writing blogs and blossomed into fully talented writers of the day. Especially women could assert their presence by writing in ezines. Puthiya Madhavai from Mumbai, Madhumitha from Chennai, Shailaja from Bangalore, Nirmala Suresh of Kolkatta, Jayanthi Shankar from Singapore are few of the feminine writers who have left their imprint.

Intense debate on Tamil development and Tamil oriented discussions are going on in yahoo groups such as Marathadi, Tamil Ulagam, Santha Vasantham, and Raayar Kapi Klup. The group santha vasantham is debating Marabu illakiyam, which means heritage poetry or traditional poetry.

Professor Anantha Narayanan of Bio Chemistry Department University of Toronto Canada is a scholar known to world by ezines and e-writings. These trendsetters have now generated interest among the Tamil scholars of Pondicherry. Pulavar Se.Ramalingan brought such scholars under one umbrella. The President of Pudhuvai Tamil Sangam Mannar Mannan launched the first ever e-zine from Pondicherry which had come out for 10 months and given space for Pondicherry's Tamil scholars to record their inner voice. "We are e-publishing this journal on a non-remunerative basis says. Se.Ramalingan who edits the ezine. The ezine Pudhucherry contains links to various other ezines and

tries to introduce everything to everyone. The life histories of Tamil Scholars like Maraimalai Adigal, Deveneya Paavanar, Mahakavi Bharathiar, U.Ve. Swaminatha Iyer finds place in this ezine. The pages of Tamil Virtual University, lists of electronic texts of Project Madurai, Online Tamil lexicon of University of Cologne are given links. The valuable compilation of Anthology of Malaysian Tamil Poetry 1887-1987 is brought to light. The news of the world's first Tamil SMS launched in Singapore by Oli, Singapore's Tamil Radio on 15 th January 2005 with lyricist Vairamuthu participating indicates the direction in which Tamil is heading for. "Sellinam" the Tamil name for mobile software developed by Muthu Nedumaran whose Murasu Email had earlier established him as single man contributing to open source software is also mentioned in its pages. "Though Computer Scholars and Tamil Scholars of Pondicherry are working in isolation with no interconnectivity they are establishing that Pondicherry leads" says Dr. Ira.Thirumurugan of the Tamil Development Independent Initiative.

[Courtesy: New Indian Express: 3rd September 2005]

NARAYANA GURU AND THE TAMIL SOIL

N.Nandhivarman

Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore in 1921 visited Narayana Guru and said, "During my travels throughout the world, I have had the good fortune to come in contact with several saints and maharishis. But I have frankly to admit that I have never come across one who is spiritually greater than Swami Narayana Guru or a person who is at par with him in spiritual attainment." To attain such spiritual status in the evaluation of Tagore, Narayana Guru wandered in Tamil soil and had been to Pondicherry, which stands proven by his Tamil devotional poems on Vedhapuriswarar Temple of Pondicherry.

Narayana Guru left his home and his forays into Tamil soil inspired him to write devotional songs in Tamil, thus his quest gave Tamil literature few outstanding books. The most outstanding work in Tamil is "Thevara Pathikankal" "Each pathiham is composed of ten songs. "The poem is unique for its devotional appeal, philosophical greatness, literary beauty as well as musical style" opines Suresh Kumar Pillai." Thevara Pathikankal" is believed to have been written in 1887 on the occasion of renovation of a Nayanar temple near Arumanoor. "Thevara pathikangal "has been recently published by Dr. T. Bhaskaran of the Malayalam Department of the Kerala University making it easier for research scholars

Narayana Guru had lived in Chidambaram which stands proven by his Chidambarastakam in Sanskrit believed to have been written along the style of Adi Sankaracharya's Lingastakam. This is composed of 8 songs of four lines each like Venba meter in Tamil. Though it is written in Sanskrit, the poem is extremely popular.

Narayana Guru knew Tamil even in his boyhood days. Before going to Marutvamalai and even after settling down in Aruvipuram, he was in close contact with several Tamil mutts and adheenams in Tamilnadu like Karaikudi, Madurai, Kumbakonam and Tiruchendur .Narayana Guru was very thorough with Sivapuranam and all the works of Pattanathu Pillayar, Manicka Vachakar, Appar, Sundaramurti, and Tirujnana Sambantar. He even translated part of Tiruvalluvar's TiruKural.

“Vallalar Ramalinga Swamikal an advocate of integral vision and social equality was like an elder brother to Narayana Guru. Narayana Guru was not in the habit of writing compositions in his own hand. He always sung them for his devotees and only very few of such compositions were recorded by people among these are three Tamil works, which have been recovered from the fast disappearing records of those days. To understand the Malayalam compositions of Narayana Guru, one should have a fairly good familiarity with the myths and legends popularly sung in Tamilnadu and also should know some of the basic terms used by the followers of Saiva Siddhanta .says

Dr.S.Omana in his doctoral thesis to the University of Kerala.

It was in such wanderings Narayana Guru visited Pondicherry, Chidambaram and Vadalur. He was attracted by Vallalar Ramalinga Samy. Thus Pondicherry's Vedhapurideaswarar was immortalized by his poetic works and Chidambarastakam placed in Sanskrit the greatness of Chidambaram.

It is generally believed that the Guru had his awakening during his solitary penance in the cave of Marutvamalai. His reference of mystical experiences given in the Atmopadesa Satakam must have direct bearing on what he had experienced in Marutvamalai. "The great awakening bestowed upon the Guru an all-inclusive vision of unity. A man who is seeing the one Absolute that transcends the phenomenal may feel tempted to withdraw himself from the maddening crowd of humanity into the silence of a cloister. But Narayana Guru experienced the vision of unity in a very different manner. The hunger of a simple villager who came to visit him became a matter of greater concern to him than theological disputation or the establishment of a new religion. He began to live in a present which was the result of an endless and pure experience of the past and the most far-reaching expectation of the future. The result was that his duties became clear as daylight to him at every step. Philanthropy became a natural hobby to him. Philosophy gave his actions a detached motive, and poetry gave him the means of natural expression. His life and ambitions were simplified and the foundations of a career of benevolence and

prosperity were laid in his personality” says Dr.S.Omana. Pondicherry has yet to awaken to the Narayana Guru’s connection. Many saints and seers have set their foot here but few are known and let the history stand corrected recording every great mans visit.

Courtesy: New Indian Express: 13 Th August 2005]

SINGAPORE SURGES AHEAD

N.Nandhi Varman

Role of Tamils in history of Singapore

“The second successful six year term of unanimous choice for President Sellappan Ramanathan of Singapore is a silent revolution. It denotes recognition could be earned by constitutional means by peace loving Tamils anywhere in the world” said Director of Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture Dr.Marudhanayagam. Pondicherry has many a contact with Singapore. The handloom weavers of Muthialpet for long had been exporting to Singapore. Pe.Tha.Rasan of Tirumalairayanpattinam of Karaikal region went to Singapore made a fortune and participated in that country’s politics. He wrote a monumental book Singaporin Varalatril Vazhukinra Thamizhargal. Pondicherry Chief Minister N.Rangasamy had lauded this book as “a fruit of many years toil and hard research “

Chinese named Singapore as Pu-luo-chung, which meant "island at the end of a peninsula" in third century. Javanese language book Nagarakretagama' of 1365 calls as Temasek, or Sea town. Vietnamese source for that name is there. But from 14th century Singapuram which means Lion City is commonly used indicating the predominance of Tamil settlers.

On 29 January 1819 Sir Stamford Raffles, Lieutenant-Governor of Bencoolen landed in the island to establish a trading station at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula after having surveyed other nearby islands. Along with him came Narayana Pillai and Pe.Tha.Rasan records the contribution of Narayana Pillai in building of Singapore. Singapore proved to be a prized settlement.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made Singapore a major port of call for ships navigating between Europe and East Asia. Rubber planting, especially after the 1870s made Singapore the main exporter for rubber in the world. At the end of the 19th century Singapore experienced unprecedented prosperity with eightfold trade expansion between 1873 and 1913. This prosperity attracted immigrants from countries around. The population grew to 80,792 by 1860 with Chinese 61.9 per cent the Malays and Indians 13.5 and 16.05 per cent respectively; and others, including the Europeans, 8.5 per cent.

Dravidian Movements impact on Singapore

In that island nation the unity of the multi ethnic society did not come over night. It had been a long and strenuous period with visionaries shaping the destiny of that nation. Its Union with Malaya, subsequent independent nationhood, all was passing phases. In that phase the political movements of Tamil Nadu played an important role. Periyar visited Malaya in 1929 to inaugurate Malaya Tamil Congress. In later years after he parted company with Congress, Singapore Dravida Kazhagam and subsequently

Singapore Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam came up as independent outfits. They were not extensions of the Tamil Nadu based political outfits. They were independent parties dedicated to the country and they never had extra territorial ambitions. Leaders like Anna advised Tamils to be loyal to the country of settlement. This mature guidance led to amalgamation of Tamils in that country's national mainstream.



Pe.Tha.Ra
san was
the
General
Secretary
of
Singapore
Dravida
Munnetra
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. In his
time even
in Ceylon
there was
a separate
Dravida

Munnetra Kazhagam unit with A.S Manavaithambi as General Secretary, so was the case of Malaysia Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. They waning of the influence of Indian nationalists, communists and Dravidian movement in the South East Asian countries where Tamils went as settlers created a vacuum which was occupied by militancy in Srilanka, but in Malaya and Singapore though these parties lost relevance, the ground they prepared helped Tamils

gaining national identity, Tamil language getting official language status, and now Tamil heading a multi ethnic country like Singapore.

As settlers from Europe amalgamated into American society Tamils and Indians became Singaporeans and Malaysians. Peace prevails in a multi linguistic and ethnic country unlike other places of turmoil. Immediately after independence doubts over its very survival were raised in international media. The pressing issues were unemployment, housing, education, lack of natural resources and lack of land.

Singapore lacked national unity among most of the population, with people still attached to their countries of origin. Chinese identifying as being from China, Indians from India and so on rather than being citizens of Singapore. Singapore dealt with each of these problems separately.

Its leaders decided that the population would need to be fluent in English and English was made the medium of education for all schools. Education, at least for primary schooling was made compulsory.

The education system was designed to be rigorous and intensive, with emphasis on immediately practical, rather than intellectual, applications, such as on the technical sciences as opposed to political discussion or philosophy. A large portion, around one-fifth of Singapore's budget was devoted to education to facilitate a large and competent work force upon graduation.

Language Policy Evolution in Tamil Nadu and Singapore

It is pertinent to note that DMK founder C.N. Annadurai's visit to Singapore and Malaysia in 1965 was an eye opener to the leader who later introduced the two language formula without diluting the importance of English. His visit and meeting with Lee Kuan Yew played an influential role in his later day policy perceptions on language as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister.

The leadership of Lee Kuan Yew achieved a miracle. After dominating political scene for longest period in office now Lee is looking back at his past policies in a mode of introspection.

In spite of all that Lee still has soft corner for his mother tongue. Lee expressed concern about the declining proficiency of Mandarin among younger Singaporeans. In one of his parliamentary speeches, he said: "Singaporeans must learn to juggle English and Mandarin".

Subsequently, he launched a television program in January 2005, in an attempt to attract young viewers to learn Mandarin. In June 2005, Lee published a book, *Keeping My Mandarin Alive*, documenting his decades of effort to master Mandarin, a language which he said he had to re-learn due to disuse. The racial unity was fostered well during Lee Kuan Yew's regime.

TAMIL PRESIDENT OF SINGAPORE

S.R.Nathan

Now an ethnic Tamil had been chosen for a second term. Mr. Sellapan Rama Nathan received a walkover on nomination Day i.e. 18 August 1999 for his first Presidential election. The Presidential Elections Committee said in the second Presidential election in August 18 2005 that Mr. Nathan has all the credentials for the office. "Not only is Mr. Nathan well regarded and respected for his public service, he is also a man of integrity, good character and reputation".

The Tamil becoming unopposed again as President of Singapore has generated lot of interest in Pondicherry and The students of Dr.Ambedkar Law college launched a signature campaign in various colleges to urge Pondicherry University to confer Honorary doctorate on S.R.Nathan citing the precedent of Maldives President getting doctorate from Pondicherry University at an earlier period. The author of the book that records all the services of Tamils in nation building of Singapore Pe.Tha.Rasan after 45 years in Singapore is back to Karaikal and presides over Kamban Kazhagam of Karaikal. It is irony of fate.

Courtesy: New Indian Express 17.09.2005

THE TAMIL FRENCH LITERARY CONNECTIONS

Thiruvalluvar's Thirukural is Tamils pride and everybody's guide in life. Secularism, essence of our constitutional principles springs from each and every couplet of this great treatise of wisdom written 2000 years ago. And Sir C.P.Ramasamy Iyer places a befitting tribute to its grandeur on record. In his preface to the French Translation of Thirukural Sir C.P.Ramasamy Iyer says "It has been rightly remarked that the Kural addresses itself to all classes and communities, and indeed to the whole human race and charges itself with the promulgation of virtue and of right conduct in the guise of familiar and friendly advice.

In a series of pithy maxims, it lays down rules of universal acceptability dealing with most of our domestic and social problems and situations. In the well known words of the philosopher, Spinoza, it is written *sub specie eternitate* though characterized by tenderness and comprehensive human sympathy, human life and love in all their forms as well as the regular of existence in the social and economic fields are alike dealt with on the basis of practical spirituality".

Thirukural, the secular book on morals had been translated in many languages and is next to that of Bible in the number of such translations. The French version of Thirukural rendered by a great *littérateur* Mr.Gnanou Diagou had fascinated many scholars. It is a

matter of pride to all Pondicherrians that Mr.Gnanou Diagou is one of the illustrious sons of this soil having earnt a name and fame in the 19th century.Thirukural had been translated into the following languages. 1) Burmese Mr. Myo Thant, Thirukkural 2) Chinese Mr.Chi Eng Hsi, Thirukkural (1967) 3). Czech Mr. Kamil V Zvelebil, Thirukural (1952-1954 4) Dutch Mr. D.Kat, Thirukural (Netherlands, 1964) 5) Fiji, Mr.S.L Berwick, Na. Thirukkurala, 1964) 6) Finnish Mr. Aalto, Pentit, Kural - The Ancient Tamil Classic (1972) 7) German Albrecht, Fenz and K. Lalithambal: Thirukural von Thiruvalluvar aus dem Tamil, Madurai (1977), Mr.A.F Cammera, Thirukural Leipzig (1803) Mr Karl. Graul, Der Kural des Thiruvalluvar, (London 1854), Mr. Karl Graul, Der Tamu lische gnomes dichter Thiruvalluvar, (Leipzig, 1865) Mr.Frederick Rickert Thirukural, selections, (Berlin, 1847) Mr. William and Norgate, Der Kural des Thiruvalluvar, (2nd ed, London, 1866) 8) French Ariel, M, Kural de Thiruvalluvar (traduits du tamoul), Paris, 1848, Barrigue de, Fontaineu, G, Le livre de l'amour de Thiruvalluva, Paris, 1889, Danielou, Alain, Thiruvallouvar Kural, Pondicherry, 1942, Jacolliot, Louis, Kural de Thiruvalluvar, (selections) Paris, 1767 Lamaisse, M, thirukural in French, Pondicherry, 1867) 9) Latin Graul, Charles, Kural of Thiruvalluvar, Tranquebar, 1866 Veeramamunivar, Thirukural (Books I and II), London, 1930 10) Malay Ismail, Hussein: Thirukural sastera kalasik Tamil yang, Kuala Lumpur, 1967,Ramily Bin Thakir Thirukural (in verses), Kuala Lumpur, 1964 11) Polish Umadevi, Wandy Dynowskiev, Thiruvalluvar Kural, Madras, 1958 12) Russian J.J Glazov

and Krishnamurthi, A, Thirukural, a book on virtue, politics and love, Moscow, 1963 Glazov, Thirukural in couplets with illustrations, Moscow, 1974 13)Swedish Frykholm Ingva, Thirukural, Uddavalla, 1971. The list is incomplete.

The complete list of languages in which Thirukural got translated is yet to be compiled. The irony is we live in an age of information technology where at our fingertips we should keep these facts. Many authors will boast that next to Bible the only other book that was translated in many languages is Thirukural. Yet none bothers to compile the data of all such translations undertaken and books published in various languages. Let scholars and institutions start compiling such lists, uploading in the Net to enable all Tamil lovers' easy access. Particularly Pondicherry with all its connections with France and with prestigious institutes like French Institute functioning here it will be appropriate that better coordination exists between Pondicherry University, Pondicherry Institute of Linguistics and Culture which hopes to become a deemed University soon and other Tamil scholars well versed in both the languages.

A great bilingual scholar Desigam Pillai in his book Tamizhagamum Frenchukararum dutifully records the services of scholars who promoted cultural exchanges with zeal. The Jesuits priests who came here to propagate their religion learnt Tamil and for the purpose of their kinsmen to understand the nuances of Tamil they wrote many books in French. The services of Mr.Boucher (1655-1732), Mr.De la

Lane (1669-1746), Mr.Bouze (1673-1735), Mr.Gargam (1690-1742), Mr.Calmette (1693-1740), Mr.Coeurdoux (1699-1774) in writing books to help French acquire proficiency in Tamil, is thus listed by Desigam Pillai. Mr.Desigam Pillai, a lawyer and Tamil scholar also mentions the names of those who learnt Tamil. Mr.Perrin (1754-1820), Mr.Maguy (1758-1822), Mr.Dubois (1770-1848), Mr.Dupuis (1806-1874), Mr.Mousset (1808-1888), Mr.Legouste (1880-1863), Mr.Lap (1834-1893). These lists may be tiring to normal readers. But it is a list to be remembered to understand the cultural fraternity that developed between the French and Tamil-speaking peoples.

Many scholars who collected the Tamil manuscripts and palm leaf texts during their stay in Pondicherry had given them to the Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris. Even now in many homes including this writer there remains palm leaf texts ravaged by time. It is high time that academic institutions in the soil of Pondicherry and the Governments here that speak of heritage engage in a quest to collect all such texts, digitalize them and microfilm such rare collections hidden in Museums of both countries and private homes. Messrs.Mousset and Dupuis wrote the Dictionnaire Français Tamoul (French Tamil Dictionary) running into 1270 pages and a Dictionnaire Tamoul Français-2 Vols. (Tamil French Dictionary) running into 1660 pages. Mr.Jules Gordin who came from France to contest an election here for the house of elders and who became a French Senator took steps to start Tamil section in the Paris University. The dream came true in 1879. From 1890 in

the Ecole des Langues Orientales Tamil classes became a reality. Mr. Vinson Julien wrote a grammar called Manuel De La Language Tamoule Grammaire, Texts, Vocabulaire, and Mr.P.Lap, A Brege De La Grammaire Française Tomoule.Mr.M.J.Baulez wrote on colloquial Tamil Méthode De Tamoul Vulgaire

These are the pioneers and many authors who succeeded them had laid down firmly the path of inter cultural exchange and language fraternity. To a layman it appears that in the post independence era, these exchanges have mellowed down, and an impetus is needed to reactivate the vigour with which Tamil was welcomed with open arms by French. The entire French literature must be translated into Tamil and vice versa. The unfinished agenda must be undertaken with renewed interest. Before the old generation that had mastery over both languages bids adieu to earthly existence, these unfinished tasks must be taken up with urgency, while for younger generations the need to nourish this cultural legacy left between the most lovable languages on earth, becomes a quest with thirst for knowledge.

THE GREATEST BARD OF TAMIL BHARATHIAR

N.Nandhivarman

The 83rd anniversary of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiar falls on September 11 of 2004. The Bharathiar Memorial Museum was set up by the Government of Pondicherry in 1972. In 1984 it was converted into a research center to which from all over the world people have come. The Government of Pondicherry headed by then Chief Minister D.Ramachandiran had brought out a beautiful book in French in 1982, which contains translations of Bharathiar's poems, prose and English articles. Such laudable exercises must be continued by successive governments to foster French and Tamil cultural exchanges by translating literatures belonging to both languages. But during his lifetime Bharathiar had struggled to bring out his works in print.

The ordeals of Poets in the colonial era to see their masterpieces in print could be easily understood by a letter through which Mahakavi Bharathiar sought financial support from his well wishers. In an open appeal written in 1921, the Great Bard of Tamil Renaissance states, "All of my manuscripts, accumulated labour of my 12 year exile have arrived here from Pondicherry. They are to be divided into 40 separate books. Most of my works which I have selected for publication are prose, stories, sensational at the same time classical, very easy, lucid, clear, luminous and all but too popular in style and diction and at the same time chaste, pure,

correct, epic and time defying.” By this appeal the Poet not only exudes confidence in his creative literature and its contents but also is convinced that he is standing at the cross roads of critical times and is destined to play a crucial role. His words further down in the same appeal will be enough to portray the missionary zeal that burnt in him. “The historic necessity of my works for the uplift of the Tamil Land which again is a sheer necessity of the inevitable, imminent and heaven-ordained revival of the East”, says Mahakavi. These words firmly reflect the inner feelings of the most enlightened Tamil mind of our times, which was destined to leave an everlasting impact on the Tamil society.

Stands Apart

The Poet’s vision was clear and he pursued his life’s mission with all his inherent strength, doing what was destined to be done. He wrote a satirical story “The Fox with a Golden Tail”, which was published in 1914. It should also be mentioned that Aurobindo Ghosh lauded the flowery language of Bharathiar in that story. Dr.Nanjunda Rao of Chennai who was immensely pleased ordered for 500 copies and many letters of appreciation poured in from all quarters. Kuvalai Kannan read those letters to Bharathiar hoping he would be pleased. But Bharathiar stated as follows: “Using my brain to its fullest capacity while I write in my mother tongue Panchali Sabadam, you alone read it, whereas if it is in English our men who are slaves to English colonial culture order for copies after copies”, the poet retorted with contempt records R.A.Padmanabhan in

Chitra Bharathi, a compilations of pictures and historical notes on Bharathiar.

Tamil Medium

At that point of time when all men of letters under colonial rule were crazy over the proficiency in the tongue of the ruling classes, Bharathiar stands apart as a champion of the Tamil cause. In his book *Essays and Other Prose Fragments* published in 1937 writing under the title “Vernaculars” Bharathiar extends support to the Tamil medium of instruction in the schools of Education.

Let me reproduce his views in verbatim: “I do not blame the Madras Council of Indian education for their anxiety to have Professor Geddes’ views on the subject of employing Indian languages as media of instruction in Indian schools. For I am aware those men’s thoughts are ordinarily moulded by their environments. Nor do I blame the good and learned Professor Geddes for his innocent comparison of the revival of Indian languages with the Gaelic revival in Wales and in Ireland. I do not know if Gaelic has any extensive and living literature. But I feel it is high time to remind all parties concerned, in the discussions like this, that most of the Indian languages have great, historic and living literatures. Of course their luster has been slightly dimmed by economic conditions during these later days. The English educated minority in this country can be pardoned for being frightfully ignorant of the higher phases of our national literatures, but they will well do to drop that annoying attitude of patronage and condescension when writing and talking

about our languages. The Tamil language for instance has a living philosophical and poetical literature that is far grander, to my mind, than that of the vernacular of England. For the matter of that, I do not think that any modern vernacular of Europe can boast of works like Kural of Valluvar..." so goes on the Great Bard. This quality and courage of conviction is rare among the educated of his times and even today the ignorance of the educated towards the grandeur of the Tamil language and their wild goose chase of the foreign language continues unabated even after the wise counsel by Bharathiar.

The themes

His book Essays and Prose Fragments contains the following topics

1) To the being of the Universe 2) The Service of God 3) The Siddha and the Superman 4) Immortality 5) Fatalism 6) The Dawn 7) Rasa- The Keyword of Indian Culture 8) Blunting the Imagination 9) The Crime of Caste 10) The Place of Women 11) Women's Freedom 12) Love and Marriage 13) Patriotism and Religious Differences 14) The National Congress 15) New Birth 16) Matri Puja 17) India and the World 18) In Memoriam 19) The Coming Age 20) Reflections 21) Some Political Maxims 22) Free Speech 23) India and war 24) Nammalvar 25) Andal 26) Rights and Duties 27) Vernaculars 28) The occult element in Tamil speech. The list of the essays will reveal the subjects that were near and dear to his heart.

Feminism

Of particular mention is his voice for the cause of feminism. Speaking about the greatness of womanhood the Poet stands apart with no sign of male chauvinism, a characteristic flaw that causes even today gender bias and female infanticide. Let me quote him "But if woman has always been the civilizer and, therefore, the spiritual superior of man, why did she get enslaved at all? For it is not only among Indians but also among the European and the Chinese and the Japanese and the Hottentots as, indeed all brutes and birds and insects, that the female has been content, till now, to occupy an enslaved, or if you please, a subordinate place to the male." There cannot be a champion of the cause of feminism than Mahakavi Bharathiar in that point of time in the history of Tamils. A forerunner for the cause of feminism he had left his imprint by way of many articles and poems.

Crusader against Caste

Bharathi describes caste as a crime against humanity and let us know his feelings well expressed in his own style "You sometimes quote ethnology, eugenics, hydrostatics and what not, to support these four thousand castes! But, alas, the ignorant masses of our country have been made to believe that this caste chaos is a special divine gift to our country and whoever transgresses it has to go to Hell. It is this belief more than anything else that makes people insensible to the injurious results of caste. If you really have your justification in ethnology or hydrostatics,

then you have been cheating people during all these centuries by telling them a different story. No science can justify cheating". The scientific temper, which the poet possesses, is what anyone who cares for fellow beings will want to inculcate in a caste-ridden society. The Poets are conscience keepers of their culture and the society in which they hail, and in unmistakable terms Bharathiar registers his voice of protest against the caste-infected society.

Spreading his message globally

Bharathiar's Tamil poems translated in many languages have established his greatness beyond an iota of doubt, at the same time very little attention is shown towards his writings in English, and it is high time his scholarly opinion on contemporary issues be understood. The Hindu in its sub-editorial dated 12 th September 1921 records the demise of this great poet thus: "We regret to learn the death of Varakavi Subramanya Bharathi at his residence in Triplicane last night. The deceased was an ardent nationalist, a great thinker, a shining speaker and a powerful writer. He is the author of number of Tamil works including National songs. His recitation of the national songs infused genuine patriotism in the hearts of his listeners. He, like many other patriots of India, was an exile in Pondicherry for some years, because his patriotic speeches did not please the Gods in power. He has for some time past been ailing and by his premature death the country has lost a born poet and a sincere patriot. Swadesamithran too paid tributes in its editorial. But it is a sad fact that only

handfuls were present when his body was cremated. Let us learn to respect great men when they are alive and be grateful for the great bards who uphold our culture universally.

MOTHER TONGUE AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION:

N.Nandhivarman

If anyone says, “I will not speak English” in England he or she won’t, say it in English. They will say “Me na vyn cows sawsnak”. Who are these people? They were the speakers of Cornish, a language of Cornwall England, which became extinct in 1777. A Primary school “Periyavar Swaminathan Ninaivu Palli” has a motto. Study English but not Study in English. Both these language speakers by such assertions are for one goal. Preserving their native tongues.

The first case is for revival of Cornish language, in which they are showing signs of achievement. Second case is an experiment to impart primary education in mother tongue fearing disappearance of Tamil in the thinking process and expressions. United States of America annexed Hawaii in 1898 and banned teaching of Hawaiian in schools. The Anglicization of education led to almost extinction of Hawaiian language. So to revive their mother tongue as medium of instruction Hawaiians created in 1983 “Aha Punana Leo” which means language nest. Aha Punana Leo was created to reintroduce their native language throughout the state including its public schools. Hawaiian language pre schools were opened in 1984 followed by secondary schools. By 1999 the first graduates in Hawaiian language came out of their colleges. This is a success story at the revival of a

mother tongue. Linguists all over believe that out of 6120 languages spoken in the world 3400 will disappear by 2100.

Many languages had become extinct. Manx, the language of Isles of Man disappeared in 1974 when its last speaker breathed his last. In the Caucasus region the death of a farmer in 1992 resulted in the death of Ubykh language. UNESCO had prepared a Red Book on Endangered Languages and to promote multilingualism had been celebrating International Mother Language Day on February 21st every year from 2000. UNESCO adopted Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which “encourages international community to take steps to protect intangible heritage, including languages, in the same way natural and cultural treasures of tangible heritage are protected”. This is the way wind is blowing globally.

Every mother tongue must be preserved seems to be the driving force for intellectual growth of humanity. In a rare coincidence, in spite of being classical language efforts are needed to revive the Tamil medium of instruction, for fear of extinction of Tamil in everyday usage. And the primary school situated in the Chief Minister N.Rangaswamy's constituency is a school with a difference. They teach Spoken English to nourish the proficiency of English language but at the same time want to stimulate thinking process in Tamil. To commemorate the memory of Late Swaminathan who was the President of Dravida Kazhagam in Pondicherry state during seventies, his son S.Nedunchezian had donated land to Senthamizh Trust for starting

this school. N.M. Thamizhmani who runs the Trust ran from pillar to post at every step to cross hurdles and raised the finances to build this school. With the approval of the Government of Pondicherry this school is conducting classes in PRE-KG, LKG, and UKG and from 1 st to 4 th standards.

A tiny baby Ashwini walks out of a class, we ask her “In which class you are studying? She replies I am doing “Arumbu” which means pre-kinder garden. Lower Kinder garden (LKG) class is named as Mottu, UKG is known as Malar. The children call the Head Mistress as Amma, teachers as Akka and Annan. The star performer of the school Nilavarasi who studied from pre kg here and now in IV th standard states that “Our teachers never used cane, never threatened us, we are brought up with love and care”. Nilavarasi now is the star dancer of the school that teaches Music, Dance, Painting and Computers too. She and all the children are proud of their school. It is surprising that amidst craze for English education in the mushrooming private primary schools, parents are willing to send their children to a Tamil medium primary school. If the history of education in Pondicherry is written from the days of French many institutions have come up and grown with the help of philanthropists. This Tamil Primary School is another example of the public contribution in education. It is surprising to find these children doing well in spoken English classes, and justifying their motto “Study English but not Study in English”. They are proficient in both languages. A pre-kg student is able to recite 30” Thirukural “stanzas with ease.

Looking to America, the speakers of 540 Native American languages admit that language is essential for perseverance of a culture of the past generations and that culture in turn is important to the future of native peoples. Many cultures and languages are racing with times to preserve their languages. Washington Post publishes a story (31.3.2003) about Northwest Tribe Struggles to Revive Its Language. Indian Country Today report (23.10.2002) speaks about a Meeting to preserve the Lakota language. Squeamish Nation puts together CD-ROM to teach its language. Native Language Institute works to stave off decline of traditional tongues. Linguist begins effort to preserve native Alaskan language. Christian Science Monitor story (11.6.2002) speaks about Tribal immersion schools rescuing language and culture.

Research is on the Effects of Including Native Language and Culture in the Schools. You will be surprised at the attempts made at preserving the 540 native languages in America where we all think English is the undisputed monarch. Like preservation of flora and fauna, preservation of all languages is the goal of human race now. None wants uniformity but crave for unity amidst diversity. If we clone all human races as one alike, then the world will become the asylum of the mad.

The Periyavar Swaminathan Memorial School is a living testimony for such struggle to preserve the native tongue and Senthamizh



Trust led by N.M.Thamizh Mani shows the aspirations of miniscule sections of society who are torchbearers of the Gandhian concept to impart education in one's mother tongue.

[Courtesy: New Indian Express dated: 18th September 2004]

The Citadel of Saiva Siddhantha and Ceylonese Scholars

N.Nandhivarman

The French India had attracted steady stream of scholars, though the names of Aurobindo and Bharathiar are popular, still there remain many who have to come to light. The Ceylonese connections to Pondicherry and the scholars of Saiva Siddhantha who landed here in pursuit of knowledge is one field that has to be researched further. Srilanka was then known as Ceylon and from Jafna Pandit Thenkovai S.Kandiah Pillai landed in Pondicherry and edited a weekly on Saiva Siddhantha. "Vittagam" which means the mind of the seed brought out for 3 years from 30.11.1933 was priced "one anna" which carried the title in French along with Tamil. Apart from the philosophical editorials, which formed a major part of the 8 page weekly publication, there is much news about the socio political situation of those times.

The Assembly of French India known as Conseil General was inaugurated on 25.11.1933 around 4 PM in the Municipal buildings amidst huge attendance by people. The French Governor George Bourret in his inaugural speech lamented at the lack of adequate education to the children from 6 to 13 years and urged the members of the assembly to improve the infrastructure of school education. He expressed grave concern over the total neglect of Tamils in learning

their mother tongue and in imparting education to their children in Tamil. George Bourret stressed that Tamil medium of instruction must be made compulsorily and higher education in Tamil must be improved. He felt that degrees should be conferred on students of Tamil medium on par with those who learn French. He also stressed the need to encourage private educational institutions. "The foresight of the French Governor is laudable and his advice is applicable even for present days" opines Dr.Ira.Thirumurugan of Tamil Development Action Group, a private initiative of Tamil scholars in the Union Territory.

After the French governor's speech election to the new assembly members took place. Advocate Chellan Naicker was chosen President. Mr.Thiagaraja Pillai of Karaikal and Mr. Sadhu Charan Mukkerjee of Chandranagore were elected as Vice Presidents. Mr. Balasubramania Pillai, Advocate Perumal Naicker and Selvarasu Chettiar were chosen as Secretaries. Mr.Balasubramania Pillai, Mr. Thanaraja Pillai, Mr. Yubert de Rozario, Mr.Henry Gaebble, Mr. Gnanou Thiagou, Mr. Joseph Laporte, Mr. Ramachandra Naicker, Mr. Sambasivam Chettiar, Mr. Veera Pillai were chosen members of the Economic Committee.

"Vittagam" apart from detailing this historical event also places on record that a Report of the Commission on Colonies (Rapport de la commission coloniale) was tabled in the assembly by Mr. Joseph Laporte.

This journal propagated the Thirumoolar School of Yoga. Thirumoolar it was believed lived for 3000 years and wrote one poem every year, which is called as “Thirumoolam” These treatises were focus of scholarly debate of those days when people felt that yoga is a way to gain longer life on earth. English bard Mathew Arnold wrote the poem Scholar gypsy in which he said gypsies possessed the knowledge to live beyond 200 or 300 years. Saint Vallalar believed that human body could transform into a body of light and vanish in the air and get lost in the vacuum. “Vittagam” and its writers were of the view that with the body they can attain divinity and stated that it was the True Attainment of Salvation. “Unmai Mukhthi Nilai” written by Pandit Thenkovai S.Kandiah Pillai expounds this theory in detail. The journal Vittagam went to India (British), Burma and Ceylon. The annual subscription was rupees 3, while for Malaya, Singapore and Saigon the annual rate was Rupees 4. A letter from a Teacher of Saint Johns College Jafna dated 18.1.1934 the reader S.G.Arulanandha said “Your articles are very stimulating of thought and action. I am a fervent Christian and you are to me interpreting truly the life of my lord and Master Jesus.” In every week from the letters to the editor published it becomes clear that this magazine left a deep imprint in Ceylon, Tamil Nadu, Malaya, Saigon and Burma.

The publisher of this philosophical weekly Mr.R.Nagaratnam was among the few nationalists who were with Aurobindo Ghosh in his initial years of the stay in Pondicherry. During the year 1923 the Inmates of Ashram

as published by M.P.Pandit in the book “Champaklal Treasures” are Rajangam, Tirupati, Khitish, Nolinda, Satyen, Kanai, Bejoy, Purani and Nagaratnam (a local devotee). Also in the picture are Punamchand, Champaben, Mrs.Kothandaraman, Mr.Kothandaraman, Champaklal, Moni, Amrita and Manmohan.

Late R.Nagaratnam Pillai born in 9.05.1899 and passed away on 26.11.1992 in his 93 rd year. The nationalist who went on secret missions to bring freedom fighters to Pondicherry and who offered asylum in his house was detained by the British Police at Tindivanam and was in prison for 15 days from 25.12.1925.He headed an agency R.Nagarathinam Pillai and Brother importing Austin and Ford Cars in French India. Also he was a Correspondent for Illustrated Weekly of India in French India and agent for Dinamani and Indian Express. Vittagam Press that brought out many books from its premises situated at 2 & 4 Ambalathadum Iyer Madam Street. Those houses had been a place frequented by Mahakavi Bharathiar, Lalalajpat Rai, Chitaranjan Das, V.V.S.Iyer, Neelakanta Brahmachari, Suthanandha Bharathiar, Maraimalai Adigal and many scholars of Saiva Siddantha School.” The Saivite School and scholars of that ideology with various “siddhar peedams” around Pondicherry are fresh areas for further research” opines Dr.N.Sengamala Thayar, the daughter of R.Nagaratnam currently in charge of Bharathiar Museum at Pondicherry.

[Courtesy: New Indian Express dated: 27th November 2004]

A JOURNEY IN RHYTHM

N.Nandhivarman

Pondicherry based M.Samuel founder of Zion School of Music imparting training to music aspirants had won the prestigious shield of Lady Pap worth's Lyre from The Trinity College of London. Trinity College of London instituted this shield in 1933 to performers who have mastered the art and put up outstanding performances. This shield will have their names engraved on this lyre and passed down through the years to all distinguished performers of all classical musical instruments. Since 1933 various artists throughout the world and 39 artists from India have been honored so far.

M.Samuel had been chosen for the year 2004. He had mastered western cultural music as disciple of Thangadurai Samuel and he can perform in violin and classical guitar. Having a Masters degree in English and Western classical and non classical music Thangadurai Samuel had groomed his disciple and the student had brought fame to his teacher by winning this shield for the year 2004

"Instruments almost identical to what we know as the "guitar" has been popular for at least 5,000 years. Yaazh of the Tamils is the oldest of such string instruments. Yaazhpanam, the current Tamil areas of Srilanka is a land where Yaazh originated. The "guitar" of the western world has derived from ancient mother instruments like Yaazh, which were invented in Srilanka, Iran, Central Asia

etc. Earliest evidence of instruments very similar to the westernized guitar appear in ancient Susa carvings and statues recovered from the Iranian Plateau. Guitar is a combination of two words. "Guit", the Sanskrit word "Sangeeta" means "music." The second half of the word "tar" is purely Persian and means "chord" or "string." So the word "guitar" is half Indian and Iranian in origin, and so is the westernized guitar derived from ancestral instruments like Yaazh has Tamil origins. Through the passage of times the name moved into the English language and today the guitar is deemed to be western instrument. " said Dr.Ira.Thirumurugan, who had written the first ever Tamil Grammar on Sinthu Padalgal and a towering scholar of Isaithamizh.

The history of western music has many milestones and epochs. The invading hordes of Vandals, Huns, and Visigoths overran Europe and brought an end to the Roman Empire around 500 A.D. In the next ten centuries the newly emerging Christian Church dominated Europe and the destiny of music, art and literature. Pope Gregory I generally believed to have collected and codified the music known as Gregorian chant the approved music of the Church. Later the University at Notre Dame in Paris created a new kind of music called organum. Secular music was sung all over Europe by the troubadours and trouvères of France.

The Renaissance (ca.1420 to 1600) was a time of great cultural awakening and flowering of the arts, letters, and sciences throughout Europe. With the rise of humanism, sacred music began for the first time to break free of

the confines of the Church, and a school of composers trained in the Netherlands mastered the art of polyphony in their settings of sacred music

Then came the Baroque period (ca.1600 to 1750) wherein composers began to rebel against the styles that were prevalent during the High Renaissance. Many monarchies of Europe vied in outdoing each other in pride, pomp and pageantry and employed composers at their courts to churn out music. Composers of that time were able to break new musical ground in creating an entirely new style of music. It was during the early part of the seventeenth century that the genre of opera was first created by a group of composers in Florence, Italy, and the earliest operatic masterpieces were composed by Claudio Monteverdi. The instrumental concert became a staple of the Baroque era, and found its strongest exponent in the works of the Venetian composer Antonio Vivaldi. Harpsichord music achieved new heights due to the works of such masters as Domenico Scarlatti and others. Dances became formalized into instrumental suites and were composed by virtually all composers of the era. But vocal and choral music still reigned supreme during this age, and culminated in the operas and oratorios of German-born composer George Frideric Handel. So goes on the history of western musical history and the era of instrumental music.

In promoting the western classical and non-conventional music Trinity College of Music, London stands apart. It introduced the first graded music exams 125 years ago and

continually developed syllabuses and a system of assessments which supports teaching and learning from the early stages right through to the profession. The Diplomas offered by Trinity College of Music London refines the 21st century musician carrying a wide range of talents. Trinity's revised and updated diploma suite rewards the abilities of these musicians helping to provide clear and logical career paths throughout the music sector. The diplomas recognize the contribution of all those in the professional music world, whether you are a violinist or tabla player, singer or session guitarist, teacher or composer.

Trinity has a long history of examining Music and Drama in India for over 100 years. The early examinations were held in Mumbai Chennai and Delhi but soon spread its wings to other cities. There is a long tradition of examinations at schools, convents and monasteries throughout India. The most popular examinations in Music in India are in Piano but increase in other subjects is visible. In recent years Electronic and Digital Keyboard have become popular. There is also a great demand for Trinity's written theory examinations in Music.

Trinity's higher level qualifications and examinations in music and music education developed over more than 120 years a commitment to conduct relevant and reliable assessments which enable candidates to show the best of what they can do in conditions which are supportive to their endeavors. There are three levels of diploma qualifications - Associate (ATCL), Licentiate (LTCL) and

Fellowship (FTCL). Trinity diplomas are fully accredited in England, by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and by the regulatory bodies in Wales and Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that Trinity's teaching diplomas at ATCL and LTCL level may provide steps towards Qualified Teacher Status. M.Samuel qualified himself to the Associate Trinity College of London diploma (ATCL) and won the shield. "Zion school of Music in Pondicherry trains students for these examinations and its services to the cause of music are laudable" opined Feminist writer Malathi Maitreyi. "The recognition for a Pondicherrian in the world of music brings cheers to our ears and his students can aim high taking this as impetus to improve their skills" said Dr.Arimalam Padmanaban of Pondicherry University.

[Courtesy: New Indian Express: 10 th September 2005]

NETHAJI'S VIETNAMESE CONNECTIONS

N.Nandhivarman

The French connection to Puducherry is well known and wherever French flag went along with it the Pudicherry connectivity became a regular feature. Saigon became second home to many Puducherrians following that rule. “In August 1858, a French squadron, which included a few Spanish warships, attacked the fortress of Danang that covered the road to Hue, the imperial capital. A year later, the squadron captured Saigon. Though their military superiority was undisputable the invaders failed to force Vietnamese to its knees. Vietnamese historians compare the French colonialists to silkworms who consumed the mulberry leaf little by little. Not until 1883, all of 25 years later did the imperial court of Saigon sign an unequal treaty acknowledging French supremacy “writes Yevgeny Kobelev in a book on Ho Chi Minh.

While French armies, which include Puducherrians, struggled to gain foothold in Vietnam the Nattukottai Chettiars from Tamil Nadu went there in search of business opportunities and Puducherrians went to take care of state administration. Dharmanathan Purushanthi of Puducherry went in 1870 and his urge to stand on his own made him bid adieu to administrative jobs. He ventured into business on the lines of Chettiars. He established a soda factory and owned a liquor shop near harbour. His success there reached

Puducherry and his brother Kannusamy Purushanthi sent his son Savarikkannu Purushanthi to Saigon. Savarikkannu Purushanthi became a moneychanger and real estate owner, minted money and came back to Puducherry as the most prosperous citizen. At that time prime property close to RajNiwas came in for auction and all the rich had an eye on that but Savarikkannu Purushanthi won the auction. Thus a job seeker made money in Indo China and brought properties in his native soil.

The Bank of Indo China too functioned in Puducherry in the place of current United Commercial Bank till Puducherry's independence. Thus Puducherry and Indo China connections led to cross country marriages. This resulted in the growth of Vietnamese restaurants even now we see in Puducherry. Puducherrians owned properties here as well as there. Savarikkannu Purushanthi indulged in breeding race horses, which earned him fame in Vietnam. While the earlier Purushanthi's were not highly educated in spite of their monetary success they did not have any political vision. But Savarikkannu Purushanthi's brother son Leon Purushanthi was a French graduate and he meticulously built his reputation as banker and at same time started airing his views for public consumption. It was a time when Mahatma Gandhi had launched his civil disobedience movement in India. Most of the job seekers from Puducherry have accepted French colonialism with reverence, but Gandhiji's movement made Purushanthi sit up and watch colonial interests and intrigues. He resigned from government service and

started fully concentrating on business. His writings started appearing in French magazines and newspapers of Indo China. He was distressed to note at the inequality shown towards Indians because of their dress. He strongly felt that modern dress is not harmful and advocated all should change from dhotis to pants which are convenient to wear and even wrote letters to Mahatma Gandhi on the subject.

Leon Purushanthi was against caste system and from Indo China he could appreciate the self-respect movement of Periyar E.V.Ramasamy, which made him, write 5 articles in French magazines yet to become known here. Though he was in Christianity, all through his life in Saigon he had closely associated with Tamil Muslims association of Saigon. He frequented Hindu temples more than the church. Leon Purushanthi is a French citizen and most of the French citizens till date have never participated in Indian or French Indian freedom struggle. They were satisfied with Liberty-Equality-Fraternity under the French flag. In Saigon though most were of this line of thinking Leon Purushanthi stands apart showing keen interest and involvement in India's freedom struggle. The rise of Nethaji Subash Chandra Bose and his Indian National army attracted the freedom loving Purushanthi. While Nethaji was taken in streets of Saigon during Japanese occupation Leon Purushanthi greeted him by presenting gold kasumaalai, which adored his wife's neck till that time. Indian Independence League of Nethaji was looking for an office space and Leon Purushanthi willingly offered his palatial house in Saigon for that purpose.

His house 76 Rue Paul Blanchy at Saigon became the Secretariat of Nethaji's Indian Independence League, news about this appeared in Azad Hind magazine too. His support to Indian independence particularly for Nethaji was not to the liking of the French; mostly the supporters of Marshal Pertain who were ruling the French controlled Saigon at that time. They were furious with Purushanthi and waiting for time to teach him a lesson. Unfortunately the World War II ended in victory to the opposite side. Japan lost and along with it Nethaji too lost. Nethaji recruited lot of Puducherrians in his Indian National army. These aspects and the support given by freedom lovers like Leon Purushanthi have become forgotten facts with the failures that embraced their struggles.

When French regained power in Saigon they picked up Leon Purushanthi from his house and imprisoned him. They tortured him like anything else and he became mentally retarded due to the cruelty inflicted upon him. Leon Purushanthi born on May 1 of 1901 within 45 years reached his glory and thereafter till he breathed last in 1968 he lived having lost his mental equilibrium. Life in Saigon became miserable with his properties being confiscated. Leon Purushanthi returned to Puducherry and lived in his house next to Raj Niwas. He used to visit Manakula Vinayagar temple and go around the park not conscious that India and Puducherry had gained independence. His sacrifices for the cause of the country still had not won any recognition. "It is high time a postal stamp be brought out on Leon Purushanthi in remembrance of him and many Puducherrians

who perished in the Indian National Army of Nethaji” said A.Ramasamy former Vice Chancellor of Alagappa University who had written the “History of Pondicherry”. Purushanthi’s descendent J.B.P.More himself a historian and let us hope he writes about Vietnam connections to Puducherry.

[Courtesy: New Indian Express 6th August 2005]

MAYYAZHI: THE FRENCH COLONY

The French wanted a foothold in the Arabian Coast. Pepper and cardamom were their main attractions. In order to be closer to sources of these spices French obtained permission from the Prince of Badagara to set up their establishment in Mahe by a treaty signed on 2nd April 1721. Mahe is a word derived from “Mayyazhi” a river in which small boats could navigate up to 3 kilometers inland from the estuary. The possession of Mahe does not come easy to the French. The French had to face the fury of the British and hostility of the Iruvalinad Nambiaris. Rulers of Badagara drove French out soon after giving it to French. But in December 1721, Marquis of Paradillan recovered Mahe for the French. Again in 1726 another peace treaty was signed between French and Molladin, the ruler of Badagara with 16 articles. In spite of the treaty the Nayar Chiefs especially the ruler of Badagara seems not to have been happy with the French. It reached a culminating point when the ruler of Badagara blockaded Mahe for 18 months. The French fleet under Mahe de Labourdonnais recovered Mahe and a peace treaty of 24th January 1742 was inked. Earlier on December 1741 a peace treaty was signed with the four Nambiaris (Local chiefs) who ruled over the territories on the right of the Mayyazhi River. Kunhi Nayar gave the small territory of Kallayi to the French in the same year. The Nayar of Kurungod became an ally of the French and with his help French were able to defeat all the neighboring Nayar and Nambiar chiefs. British captured Mahe

and Pondicherry in 1761. Mahe was razed to ground and when recovered in 1765 French had to rebuild. Hyder Ali visited Mahe in 1766 April and ten years later he gifted villages of Pallur, Pandakkal and Nallathura and adjoining areas. This is how Mayyazhi came under French colonial rule explains J.B.P.More in his recent book on Mahe. And still Mahe fails to regain its old name and remains content with being Mahe, a version corroborating the name of French Chief Mahe de Labourdonnais.

Numerous books on freedom struggle in French India are Pondicherry centric, and the struggles of enclave territories have missed their due place in history. To fill up this vacuum Dr.J.B.P.More had brought out a beautiful book FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN FRENCH INDIA, which speaks about the enclave in the Arabian coast namely Mahe. Dr.J.B.P.More the historian and social scientist is a Tamilian living in France who obtained his Doctorate degree from Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. His book places on record the Mahe Revolt of 1948 against the French regime under Governor Baron. "The role of nationalist leaders of Mahe like I.K.Kumaran and P.K.Usman stands testimony to the fact that ideals and principles rather than power and profit can be great motivating factors in the struggle for freedom and the manifestation of nationalism" opines JBP.More.

J.B.P.More specializes on Muslims and Dravidian inter-cultural actions. His book "Muslim Identity, Print Culture and the Dravidian Factor in Tamil Nadu" focuses on

“Muslim Politics in Tamil Nadu in the context of Colonialism and their response to modernity in the two decades before India’s freedom. In this book the author recapitulates some of the themes and information but expands upon them in the backdrop of print in Tamil Nadu and in relation to Tamil identity politics as championed by the Dravidian movement under Periyar E.V.Ramasamy and Anna” opines A.R.Venkatachalapathy in a review of this book in the columns of The Hindu dated 12 th October 2004. His first book “Political Evolution of the Muslims of Tamil Nadu and Madras 1930-1947” published by Orient Longman Limited in 1997 won the prestigious Book Room International Award for the year 1998.

In view of his French nationality and permanent residence at France, though yearly visits to his home next to Raj Niwas in Pondicherry keeps his contacts with his roots alive, JBP More has the opportunity to frequent the libraries of Paris. In the “Bibliothèque Nationale” of Paris he found a book on Bhagawatha Purana written by Maridas Poulle in 1769. More was astonished to find the first Indologist’s book. Maridas Poulle is the first translator of a Tamil classic into French. Maridas Poulle (1721-1796) is a name unknown till J.B.P More unearthed his manuscripts from the Paris library. It must be noted that J.B.P.More is not a blood relative of Maridas Poulle. More reedited this book in 2004 and published in Pondicherry, which was widely distributed in France. J.B.P.More also proposes to publish further works of Maridas Poulle including his essays on Indian history.

J.B.P.More translated 40 poems of Mahakavi Bharathiar into French and brought out a full-scale book in French “ L’Inde face a’ Bharati, Le Poet Rebelle” This book speaks about Bharathis life, his literary activities with a special emphasize on the French influence in his writings. The writings of Voltaire, Victor Hugo, Proudan, and age of enlightenment had left a deep imprint in the poet’s vision. J.B.P.More traces these influences from Bharathiar’s works. One of the illustrious sons of Pondicherry’s soil had earnt recognition with his books. The book speak will place his name on high pedestal among social scientists and historians of Pondicherry.

Courtesy: The New Indian Express-weekend
18.12.2004

MOUNT MOHSIN OR MOUNT EVEREST?

The highest peak, Mount Everest was first measured in 1856. It was scaled as 8839 m i.e. 29,000 feet high. But it was fixed at 29,002 feet [8840m] high. The arbitrary addition of 2 feet was added to avoid the impression of a rounded calculation. Another Indian survey in the year 1950 concluded the height to be 29.028 feet. In the year 1998, the American Everest Expedition installed a GPS unit on the highest bedrock and a value of 29.035 feet [8850 m] was fixed based on this device. Nepal did not agree to this and holds the view that the height is 8848 m only. The Peoples Republic of China sent an expedition team in May 22nd 2005. After months of hard work, China's State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping announced the height of Everest as 8844.43 m. This newest height is based on the actual rock and not on the snow and ice caps. China claims this to be the most accurate measurement.

There is not only lack of consensus in measurement and height, each country has its own name for Mount Everest. Nepal calls it Sagarmatha, thereby revealing the pre-historic fact that Himalayas was once ocean .Sagar means sea, matha means mother. Tibet calls it Chomolangma, the meaning of the word must be found in Tibetan language.

Mount Everest was first discovered in 1852 and till 1865 it was only referred as Peak XV. The British Surveyor General of India Sir Andrew Waugh gave its current name Mount

Everest. China continues to oppose this name. China's People's Daily in 2002 wanted a colonial name to be removed and the peak known by its Tibetan name. Meanwhile who first measured it stirs another controversy. A claim is made that Radhanath Sikdar, an Indian mathematician and surveyor from Bengal was first to identify the peak in 1852 using trigonometric calculations based on measurements made with telescopic measurements from 240 kilometers away in India.

To ascertain this let us look for other evidences. The book Great Arc by John Key describes the stupendous scientific expedition undertaken across the Indian sub continent in 19th century under the British Raj. The Frontline magazine from The Hindu group interviewed John Key, when he came to Chennai to participate in the 200th anniversary celebrations of the beginning of Great Arc, and to deliver William Lampton Commemoration lecture on Great Trigonometrical Survey. In that interview published in Frontline September 26, 2003 he states:

"The Great Arc has always been presented as a British achievement. Lambton and Everest associated with it were British. One has to remember, as someone said this evening, most of the mathematical work, which is really the most important aspect was done by..... [Interruption by Frontline correspondent: "By Bengalis?]

"Not just Bengalis. Precision engineering, necessary for the instrument used in the

Great Arc, is very critical. A lot of these instruments were made in India. The Great Arc's senior most instrument designer and engineer was in fact from Arcot in Tamilnadu. He was called Syed Hussain Mohsin. He was most brilliant instrument manufacturer. People like Lambton and Everest were heavily indebted to him, and indeed said so."

During this interview John Key answers a pertinent question: Is it true that George Everest had never seen the peak that is named after him. ?John Key "He never saw the peak. It was after him because it was his completion of the measurement of the Great Arc that made it possible to measure the altitudes of Himalayan peaks. It was in the course of the measurement of all the peaks visible at that time that the mountain was discovered. So it was named in his honour."

Saint Thomas Mount was the starting point of the Great Trigonometrical survey. The Great Arc was just a north-south measurement. The GTS measurement went on until about 1880 within India itself. After 1880 it extended east and west to Burma, Afghanistan and so on. It extended into Burma, Thailand and Laos in the last 20 years on 19th century.

So it becomes evident that Syed Hussain Mohsin, the senior most instrument designer and engineer, with all the experience he gathered from the beginning of survey till it reached Himalayas, has a unique place, since his services are acknowledged by both William Lambton and George Everest.

In western countries, any discovery is named after the discoverer. All scientific names in various fields are derived from their inventor's name. Hence it would be most appropriate to change the name of Mount Everest, a peak on which George Everest never set his foot, to Mount Mohsin, duly acknowledging the brain behind the expedition and discovery. The claims of others have no such impartial endorsement as that of Syed Hussain Mohsin. This demand, I had made in one of my articles in the book written by me in 2006.

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Colonization- DECOLONIZATION and Recolonization

N.Nandhivarman
General Secretary Dravida Peravai

Introduction: History is still shrouded in mystery. Selectively people cling to certain clichés and try to define history as they conceive it. The mindset of the general mass is tuned to listen to one-sided views that put a lid on the truth. Parrots repeat what is taught, and people conditioned to colonial reflexes, sing lullabies for their colonial masters. It is true all humans and rulers are not bad, but to differentiate between bad and good rule, a true historian has a unique role to play. We live in an era of information technology transforming towards nano-technology era. This era of global village brings to us many painful stories of the past, when as bonded labors and slaves our people faced the wrath of colonialists.

Indian born Kumud Merani had produced a documentary titled “Girmit Ki kahani” in Hindi and “Sweet Sorrow” in English on the injustices meted out to Indian labourers who were duped and sent to Fiji between 1879 and 1916. This documentary had won the Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union Award in the News and Current Affairs category for the year 2004. Similar travails of Pondicherrian’s taken to French colonies are yet to be compiled from archival materials. These pages need not be kept in dark. What has happened has

happened. We have no prerogative to portray what we want to, instead of telling what really happened. India obtained freedom at midnight, but Pondicherry at one fine dawn. Yet there is no comparative study on Pondicherry's decolonization in comparison with other French colonies. Nor there exists a comparative study incorporating Pondicherry's freedom struggle with other freedom movements in former French colonies. There is need for India centric comparative study on British, Portuguese and French colonialism. These remarks are aimed at scholars and Institutions of Pondicherry intending to stimulate and activate them to rectify these lapses in our historical thought. Let us think about our past, present with dreams for future.

Decolonization Drive of 20 th Century: Decolonization became the societal goal of the peoples under colonial regimes aspiring to achieve self-determination. It reflected in the United Nations General Assembly's proclamation on 14 December 1960 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples - resolution 1514 (XV). The Declaration states that "the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the United Nations Charter, and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and cooperation, and that steps should be taken to transfer, unconditionally, all powers to the Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories so that they might enjoy complete freedom and independence". Also in 1960, the Assembly approved resolution 1541 (XV),

defining free association with an independent State, integration into an independent State, or independence as the three legitimate options of full self-government

Liberation of Colonies: Let us have a look at colonies that attained liberation. A British Colony and Protectorate Togoland united with the Gold Coast in 1957 to form Ghana. French administered Togoland became independent as Togo in 1960. Italy ruled Somaliland joined with British Somaliland protectorate in 1960 to form Somalia. French colony of Cameroon's gained independence as Cameroon in 1960 while British ruled northern territory of Cameroon's joined Nigeria and southern territory with Cameroon in 1961. British administered Tanganyika became independent in 1961. In 1964, Tanganyika and the former protectorate of Zanzibar, which had become independent in 1963, united as a single State under the name of the United Republic of Tanzania. Belgian administered Ruanda-Urundi voted to divide into the two sovereign States of Rwanda and Burundi in 1962. New Zealand ruled Western Samoa became independent as Samoa in 1962. Australia administered Nauru attained independence in 1968. Australian ruled New Guinea united with Papua and became the independent State of Papua New Guinea in 1975.

That is how the fresh air of freedom was breathed by various colonies in the previous century. Now let us have a look at the timetable of French colonies on their road to independence.

French Colonies towards liberation:

Indo-China gained Independence as Viet Nam (1945) Laos (1949) and Cambodia (1953). French Establishments in Oceania & French Guiana, Martinique, Reunion, St.Pierre & Miquelon, Guadeloupe and dependencies underwent change of status in 1947. Morocco in 1956 and French Guinea obtained Independence as Guinea in 1958. French Sudan became independent Mali in 1960. Ivory Coast after Independence changed the name to Mauritania in 1960. French West Africa gained Independence as Dahomey (now Benin) in 1960. Niger Colony became Niger and then gained Independence as Senegal in 1960. French Somaliland attained Independence as Djibouti in 1977.

Madagascar (1960) and Comoros (1975) gained independence. New Hebrides is under Anglo-French Condominium. Tunisia attained independence (1956), Cameroon (1960), Togo (1960), and Vanuatu (1980). Italy Somaliland Trust Territory got Independence as Somalia (joined with British Somaliland) in 1960.

Others: East Timor attained independence in May 2002 and joined the United Nations in September 2002 as Timor Leste. In 1963, the Federation of Malaya became Malaysia, following the admission to the new federation of Singapore, Sabah (North Borneo) and Sarawak. Singapore became independent in 1965. Following the ratification in 1964 of Articles of Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar, the United Republic of Tanganyika

and Zanzibar was formed and later changed its name to the United Republic of Tanzania.

Colonies of Today: United Nations documents issued in 2002 lists the following areas as ones still considered to be without self-rule. That means colonialism is yet to be completely wiped out. In AFRICA Western Sahara is first in that list alphabetically. In ATLANTIC AND CARIBBEAN United Kingdom administers Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Montserrat, St. Helena, Turks and Calicos Islands whereas United States of America rules United States Virgin Islands. In EUROPE Gibraltar is under the control of United Kingdom. In the PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEANS American Samoa and Guam are with United States. Pitcairn under United Kingdom and Tokelau remain with New Zealand. Since on 2 December 1986, the United Nations General Assembly determined that New Caledonia was a Non-Self-Governing Territory, we can say that New Caledonia is the only colony under France even in this century.

The Catalyst for Change: Decolonization British style:

The aftermath of Second World War, led to rapid disintegration of the European empires. Colonialism downed its shutters. A salubrious breeze of freedom swept colonialism. Colonies became independent states.

“Decolonization and the British Empire 1775-1997” by Professor of Political Theory in University of Wales D. GEORGE BOYCE

“analyses the ideas and policies that governed the British experience of decolonization. It shows how the British political tradition, with its emphasis on experience over abstract theory, was integral to the way in which the empire was regarded as being transformed rather than lost. This was a significant aspect of the relatively painless British loss of empire. It places the process of decolonization in its wider context, tracing the twentieth-century domestic and international conditions that hastened decolonization, and, through a close analysis of not only the policy choices but also the language of British imperialism, it throws new light on the British way of managing both the expansion and contraction of empire.”

With India's declaration of independence it became apparent that it was only a matter of time before Britain's other colonies demanded their own independence. By 1957 only two of Britain's colonies in Africa had gained their independence they were the Gold Coast and Sudan. The rest were to quickly receive their independence between 1957 and 1964.

“The characteristics of these independences were the methods with which they carried out by the British. They followed the same plan in each colony, which was to prepare the colony for self-rule by training people for the new positions within government and in other sectors which the British settlers had dominated in. This meant the new independent country would be able to support her. It also meant that the likely hood of a power vacuum would be reduced after the British left,” opines a comparative study.

Decolonization French way:

France was another great imperial power who decolonized after the Second World War although her reasons and methods were quite different from Britain's. "Whereas the British realized the colonies were beginning to become a burden the French believed they had to re-assert their national prestige by keeping control of their colonies. This may explain why the French experience of decolonization was so different to Britain's. French decolonization was bloody and bitter whereas Britain's was quite peaceful and quite painless. France fought two costly and bloody wars over her colonies. The first of these was in Indo-China, which had been under French rule since the 19th Century. During the Second World War Indo-China was invaded and occupied by the Japanese. Vietminh led by Ho Chi Minh fought a guerrilla war against the Japanese. At the end of the Second World War the French intended to retake control of Indo-China but before they could the Vietminh declared independence. Fighting broke out in 1946 and continued for eight years before the French suffered a massive defeat at Dien Bien Phu. This was the decisive point of the war with an armistice being signed soon after. France had lost much in the war including 91,000 men and their colony".

"France's African Empire started to decolonize after the humiliating defeat at Dien Bien Phu as riots spread across the French African states. France realized she could not hold her empire together anymore and begun decolonizing. All the French African colonies

were granted their independence between 1956 and 1960 with the exception Algeria. Algeria held a unique place within the French Empire as it had been formally integrated into France thus making it not a colony but a part of France itself”.

“An armed rebellion led by the F.L.N. (Front d'Libération National) in 1954 led to bloody civil war in Algeria. In 1958 General de Gaulle was persuaded to come out of retirement to end the conflict in Algeria. Charles De Gaulle realized that France could not win the war and that it would be a major strain on the economy to continue it. He begun talks for independence and he and the F.L.N. leader signed a settlement in 1962”.

French dream to colonize Pondicherry:

History of French in India is a monumental work written by Colonel G.B.Malleson, which narrates the events that lead to the founding of Pondicherry in 1674 to the capture of that place in 1761. In the reign of Louis XII, in the year 1503, two ships of the merchants of Rouen took to seas and were never heard thereof. This marks the first French attempt to set foot on Indian soil. Though many had the urge nothing concrete emerged. On June 1 1604 “a company was established under Kings letters patent, granting it exclusive trade for 15 years.” This also failed to take of due to faction feuds among the founders. 7 years later Louis XIII tried again in vain to activate the company. During 1615 two merchants sought transfer of the company to them, which was stiffly opposed by the company.

Hence as compromise formula the King created a coalition of both sides and conferred on July 2, 1615 letters patent. The next year two ships set to sail to India. Commodore de Nets was in charge of the big vessel and Captain Antoine Beaulieu of the smaller vessel. The Dutch crew in Beaulieu's ship obeying the diktats of their government left the vessel of Beaulieu. And Beaulieu had to dispose the ship and join the vessel of Commodore de Nets. In spite of all such travails the venture was profitable. So the company launched 3 more vessels on trip to India. "Montmorenci" with 162 men, 22 guns with 450-ton capacity, L'Esperance with 117 men, 26 guns and 400-ton capacity, "L'Hermitage" with 30 men, 8 guns and with 75-ton capacity, were placed under Beaulieu's chief command. In that trip the Dutch sank L'Hermitage. Next 20 years no further efforts to reach east were undertaken. In 1642 a new company "La Compagnie des Indes with Richelieu was launched but before ships could set to sail he passed away. A resting place mid way to Indes became their passion. The first French vessel to Madagascar reached its shores in summer of 1642. The local people resisted French settlers. The company had to incur heavy losses in combating local people and ultimately gave up its claims to Madagascar in 1672.

In 1664 French "Compagnie des Indes" with a capital of 15,000,000 livres was formed. A charter by the Government granted the company exclusive rights for 50 years to trade with India with total exemption from taxation. Government also agreed to reimburse all losses if any. They first went for Madagascar.

On March 7, 1665 with four ships and 520 men. They changed its name to Isle Dauphin. Earlier Portuguese had called it Saint Lawrence. The local revolt against French occupation continued and culminated in the fierce massacre of almost all within the walls of Fort Dauphine.

These abortive attempts gradually led to French setting foot on Indian soil and making it a colony of France.

Reason for India becoming a destination:

Why do all colonialists set their eye on India? It is needless here to narrate how French obtained a foothold on Indian soil and how they later became rulers. It is vital to know why India was colonized, be it by the British, French and the Portuguese?

“The East India Company was founded in 1600 to sell British woolen cloth to India. Their ships arrived in Surat in 1608 with vast quantities of broadcloth but the trade soon faltered and died out. What changed their fortunes was the discovery of cotton, which was completely unknown in the west,” says Ms. Crill who had coauthored a book Trade, Temple and Court: Indian Textiles from Tapi Collections. Another author of the same book Ms. Ruth Barnes states that “Textile trade surfaces repeatedly in the social and economic histories of these times. For centuries textiles were crucial currency in the Indian Ocean trade. If you wanted a piece of the spice trade in the 14 th century, you did not have a

chance unless you showed up in the Eastern Indonesia with high quality textiles.” Well these textile scholars have stated one reason for India being a popular destination for colonialists. Colonialists came to market their products but were drawn towards buying Indian fabrics. “ Millions of Indian cotton arrived in England at that time, so much so that the wool and linen weavers began to protest and a law prohibiting Indian textiles was passed in 1700” says Rosemary Crill of the V&A Museum, London in her book.

Decolonization of French India:

Let me quote verbatim the last rituals performed for decolonizing Pondicherry as written in the book Decolonization of French India, since I do not want to be drawn in controversies by writing a new version myself. “The procedure incorporated into the joint communiqué, which was simultaneously published from New Delhi and Paris, ran as follows Desirous of reaching a final settlement on the question of the French establishments in India, The government of India and the Government of the French Republic through their representatives in Delhi has engaged in negotiations. As a result of these negotiations the two governments have agreement on the following procedure. All elected members of the representative assembly and the Municipal Councils of the establishments will be met at a Congress on October 18 in the settlement of Pondicherry to consider the joint proposals of the two governments for a final settlement of the future of the settlements and

record their decision on these proposals as an expression of the wishes of the people”.

“An arête of the Commissaire de la Republique was published on 11 October in the Journal official of Pondicherry with a view to acquainting the people the conditions of the consultation. The Pondicherry Government issued summons to the elected municipal members of the south Indian settlements and the Representative assembly to meet at Kizhur about 10 miles on the border of west of Pondicherry on 18 October at 10 o'clock to decide the future of the French settlements in India”.

“The members of the four settlements whose election was valid up to 1 st January 1954 had been asked to vote on that day either for the continuation of French rule in these settlements or for merger of these settlements with the Indian Union. The importance of the Congress and the necessity of the members to attend the Congress were expressed in a circular, which was signed by the Secretary General for French India and dispatched to the elected members accompanied by the topographical map of the place where the congress was to be held together with the admission card. There was a proposal to hold the congress at Karaikal, but that was set aside. Kizhur, a tiny hamlet situated in Indian Territory was finally chosen in order to avoid the disturbances, which the presence of Goubert and Muthupillai might have provoked if the congress had been held at Pondicherry. Balasubramanian, President of the Representative Assembly acted as presiding officer of the Congress. Out of 178, 170

members voted overwhelmingly in favour of the merger with Indian Union and 8 voted against. The results were declared in the presence of Pierre Landy and Kewal Singh. The period of suspense was over”.

“The usual scene of excitement tension and violence, which had tainted previous elections in French India, was totally absent here in this hamlet. It was so to speak a parody of consultation. France had to agree to this as a sop to satisfy her constitutional requirements and India had to accept this verdict given by the members of the municipal councils and representative assembly whose elections she had protested as irregular. The signing of the treaty at New Delhi on 21 October followed this. The remaining 10 days witnessed the French India authorities make hectic preparations for total withdrawal from Pondicherry and Karaikal. As fixed earlier Escargueil left Pondicherry for France on 31 st October handing over charge to Pierre Landy. The French national flag was removed from the top of the Governors house in the evening of the same day. On 1 November of 1954 at 6.45 in the morning a document of transfer was signed between Pierre Landy representing France and Kewal Singh, Indian Consul general and Indian Commissioner designate in the official residence of the former. In Karaikal too Boucheney aided by Duvauchelle, an Officer of the foreign department who had recently arrived here, handed over power to the India administration”

“Immediately after this the Indian national flag was unfurled over the government house to the tumultuous ovation of thousands of

people who had gathered there marking the close of seven-year tortuous negotiations. Throughout the day there was jubilation everywhere in Pondicherry, In Karaikal, in Mahe and in Yenam and the rest of India in this hour of joy. As a result of the historic decision taken at kizhur more than 3 lakh people rejoined their mother country India at the dawn of 1 November thereby ending 240-year-old French rule on the four settlements of South India”.

The people of India welcomed the residents of the erstwhile French settlements into the larger fold of Indian citizenship. “A part of India separated from the motherland is coming back to us on its own freewill” Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and President Rajendra Prasad said “we shall be equal partners in a common endeavor to work for the progress and prosperity of India” The congress of Kizhur facilitated the dissolution of French colonial rule in the French pockets, but French sovereignty over them continued legally till de jure transfer had taken place in 1962.

FRENCH AND FRENCH CITIZENS IN INDIA PRESENT STATUS:

The colonial rule created a new class of citizens, Indian born yet French citizens by option. These Indians have roots in Pondicherry but have their work and homes in France. For those left in the soil of Pondicherry France has constitutional arrangements to look after the interests of Indian born French citizens. This arrangement is unique and deserves close appraisal.

The notification issued by the Rastrapathi Bhavan recently had stated that hereafter the Ministry of Non Resident Indians will be named as Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in English and Pravasi Bharatiya Karya Mantralaya in Hindi. But within our country we have residing Non Resident French citizens but who are Indians by birth but French citizens by option. It will be interesting to compare with what French does for Overseas French affairs. When French left their former colonies, they left large sections who opted to become French citizens. There are more than 20 million French citizens living abroad in various former French colonies including Pondicherry, which is a Union Territory under Indian Union.

One hundred and fifty five delegates are elected by direct universal suffrage by the French communities abroad for a period of 6 years and this body is presided by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France. French citizens in America elect 32 delegates and from Africa 47 seats thus the total of "A series of constituencies" is 79. In "B series" there are 76 seats and the break up is 52 seats from Europe and from Asia-Oceania and the Orient 24. Within these 24 seats two are chosen from Pondicherry. Half of the Electoral College is renewed every 3rd year.

All former colonies are divided into 52 electoral districts, with one or more delegates per district. A country may have several electoral districts, just as an electoral district may cover several countries.

French people residing abroad through their 155 representatives elect twelve Senators to French Parliament. They get elected one-third at a time for 8 years in 2004 and for 7 years in 2007 and for 6 years from 2010. Currently the political party UMP (Union pour un mouvement populaire, which means Union for Popular Government) has 9 members thus elected. They are Mrs. Paulette Brisepierre, Mr. Jean-Pierre Cantegrit, Mr. Christian Cointat, Mr. Robert-Denis Del Picchia, Mr. Hubert Durand-Chastel, Mr. Louis Duvernois, Mr. André Ferrand, Mr. Michel Guerry, and Mr. Xavier de Villepin.

Parti Socialiste has 2 Senators, Mrs Monique Cerisier Ben Guiga and Mr. Guy Penne. The party CRC (Communiste, Républicain et Citoyen) has one Senator Mr. Pierre Biarnes. Twelve personalities appointed by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs for six-year terms "by reason of their competence in matters concerning the general interests of France abroad". They are renewed one-half at a time every three years.

The Constitution of 27 October 1946 (IVth Republic) stipulated that the new Parliament would comprise a National Assembly and a "Council of the Republic" (as the Senate was called until 1958) within which "the French of the Exterior" would be represented. This may be like our lower and upper houses in Parliament. The National Assembly pondered and decided how to effect this representation. It decreed, in a resolution dated 13 December 1946, that three "Councillor of the Republic" seats (out of 320) would go to personalities representing Non Resident French citizens

living in Europe, America and Asia-Oceania-Orient respectively.

For more than two decade the following associations were looking after the interests of Non Resident French citizens in Paris. They are the Union of French Chambers of Commerce Abroad, the French Overseas Teachers Association, the Non-Resident French War Veterans Federation, and the Overseas French Union (Union des Français de l'étranger, UFE), founded in 1927. These four bodies mooted a suggestion for creation of a "high council" by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The then Prime Minister, Robert Schuman, and his Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault signed a Decree setting up the High Council for French People residing abroad. on 7 July 1948.

The first High Council was composed of 55 members: 8 ex officio members (the three Senator-Councillors of the Republic, the president and director of the UFE, the presidents of the Chambers of Commerce, of the Teachers Association and of the War Veterans Federation, 42 elected officials, and 5 members nominated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

The first CSFE elections of 1950 were held in seventy countries of Europe, America, Asia and Oceania, according to a protocol defined in a Ministerial Decree dated 10 December 1949 and signed by Robert Schuman..

Article 24 of the Constitution of 25 September 1958 states, "French nationals settled outside France shall be represented in the Senate."

Two Executive Orders were issued, on 15 November 1958 and 4 February 1959 respectively, for organizing this representation and providing the CSFE with new status. The CSFE, while retaining its advisory role, became the sole Electoral College for electing Senators from abroad.

Their numbers increased from three to six, two representing Europe and America, one representing Asia-Oceania and three representing Africa. It was thus divided into three sections for the Senatorial elections of 23 April 1959. The CSFE had 84 elected members but it became clear that Europe and America were under-represented in comparison with Africa. The number of Senators was therefore brought up to nine for 1962 elections.

After the creation of the Democratic Association of French Citizens Abroad (Association Démocratique des Français à l'Etranger - ADFE) in 1980, the CSFE was reconstituted in 1982. The Act of 7 June 1982 paved way for the election by universal suffrage of Delegates to the CSFE, which (with the exception of twenty-one members chosen for their competence but not having Senatorial voting rights) was no longer a body of appointed personalities. And the election of twelve Senators thereafter is only by the elected members of the CSFE.

The AFE is entrusted by law with the task of advising the Cabinet. The Minister of Foreign Affairs defines the objectives and priorities of the assembly chaired by him. The Senators place before the Senate, the National

Assembly and the Economic and Social Council the propositions, motions, resolutions and wishes expressed by their electors. The twelve Senators, ex officio members of the AFE, can introduce Bills or legislative amendments reflecting the hopes and needs of French people living around the world.

The appointed councillors are designated by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs on the basis of their particular qualifications. The members of the Council may form political groups. At present, there are three of these: UFE (Union of the French People residing abroad 89 Members), ADFE (Democratic association of French People residing abroad 57 members) and RFE (Rassemblement des Français de l'étranger = Rally for the French People residing abroad 32 members. A minimum of 18 members is required to form a group. UFE and RFE is united under the name of Inter-groupe UMP in the AFE.

The college of Vice-Presidents (or conference of Vice-Presidents) enacts the work of the Council and reports back to the President. The plenary assembly, attended by the ex officio members, the appointed members and the elected members, meets once a year in Paris at the beginning of September.

Members are divided among specialized committees which prepare reports for submission to the plenary assembly.

There are at present five standing committees: the cultural affairs and education committee with 39 members, the social affairs committee 39 members and the finance and economic

affairs committee with 39 members including Mr. M. Ejilane Souprayen) .The law and rules committee of 39 includes Lieutenant-colonel (H) Mohamed Moustafa and the European Union committee has 27 members. These committees meet four times a year, usually in February, May, September and December.

The AFE exercises real political authority at the moment when Senators representing French people abroad are elected. Elected AFE members can sponsor a candidate for the French presidential elections. The AFE is "called upon to give the Cabinet opinions on matters and projects of concern to French People residing abroad and on developing France's presence abroad". They are not prior opinions, however. The AFE could rather be said to fulfill the role of a specialized Economic and Social Council. The Cabinet may consult it, or it may intervene at its own initiative. AFE members, as elected representatives of the various French communities abroad, are concerned to defend the interests of French People residing abroad. They study matters relating to the education of French people abroad, their rights, their social situation, their economic and taxation problems. The AFE may use background studies to inform the French authorities on specific problems (education, law, social affairs, foreign trade, taxation, etc) affecting the interests of French People residing abroad.

This French experience is novel and it must be studied by the Government of India to evolve novel methods to solve the issues that haunt the Overseas Indians and the newly formed Ministry must emulate the representative

system followed by France. British left India satisfied with getting 2 nominated M.P Seats in the Lok Sabha for Anglo-Indians. France did not plead for seats in the legislature for Franco-Indians. It worked out the above stated arrangements to manage the Indian born French nationals. From Fiji to Srilanka people of Indian origin are there. Will it be advisable if a similar arrangement is made for them under the aegis of the Ministry of Overseas Affairs? Union Territory Act has provision for 3 nominated members but it should be done according to the procedure adopted for Rajyasabha nominations i.e.: educated and social activists alone be nominated. That is another story.

Problems galore left by colonial legacy:

Colonial policy had a couple of goals: (1) to control the supply of valuable raw materials, such as minerals, petrol, wood, plantation crops such as rubber, sugar, pepper, cotton etc., (2) to secure a market for the industrial exports of the colonizing country, (3) country to settle in for the colonizing country's emigrating population, (4) strategic importance. Let us have a look at the problems left over by the colonial legacy.

In the colonies, decades, in some countries centuries of colonial rule had resulted in major changes. In many cases, the borders of the colonies had been unilaterally drawn by Colonial powers with little regard for ethnicity and history. The border disputes India has with its neighbours is a left over of the colonial legacy. The contiguity of Pondicherry is missing and the enclave territories separated

by miles scattered as dots remain in Indian map, which is also an issue of the colonial legacy and poses problem for gaining statehood to be on par with other Indian states.

The infrastructure established by the colonial administration served mainly the interests of the colonial administration. There are many fields that warrant a study. More information may be in French and their archives. It is high time our scholars scan all such information to provide an in-depth study of Pondicherry's colonization and decolonization.

While such study into past is also needed, there is greater need to study how decolonized nations have faced the challenges in the post-colonial era. We in India are still facing the issues left by the colonial legacy. Let us see the experience of Singapore and Malaysia and the issues which will be of importance too from our standpoint. Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore stated once that “ empires never last forever, that either the master and subject races finally merged to a unified society or the empire ends with subject races clashes violently and finally emerging as separate nation and entity.” Ironically, his statement can equally be applied to the independent country of Malaysia where race and racial issues are still a sensitive and election issue. Ethnocentrism was and is still not something that can ever be stamped out.

The Kingdom at a Crossroads written by Marijke van der Meer tells the story of Surinam. In the late 18th century the British swapped their South American colony – now

known as Surinam – for Manhattan, and then controlled by The Netherlands. For many years the Dutch reckoned they had the better of the deal, after all the British lost Manhattan quite quickly, while Surinam only gained its independence in on November 25 1975.

Professor Oostindie opines that there was not enough time to find solutions to many of Surinam's long standing issues. "The Dutch government did whatever was necessary to accomplish independence," he says, "basically this was done by not solving several problems such as the border dispute with Guyana. They offered more development aid than had been conceived of before and they said that all Surinamers, even five years after independence, would be eligible for Dutch nationality, stimulating an exodus to The Netherlands. Today there are just over 400,000 people in Surinam but there are 300,000 people of Surinamese descent in The Netherlands. The whole demographic growth of this nation has been in The Netherlands rather than Surinam. The offer of French citizenship to people of Pondicherry origin by the French created a similar exodus which needs a comparative study.

Reports from a wild country: Ethics of Decolonization by Deborah Bird Rose "Explores some of Australia's major ethical challenges. Written in the midst of rapid social and environmental change and in a time of uncertainty and division, it offers powerful stories and arguments for ethical choice and commitment. The focus is on reconciliation

between Indigenous and ‘Settler’ peoples, and with nature.”

The above stated problems are just examples and lot remains to be studied about the postcolonial problems left over of the colonial legacies in all former colonies.

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Recolonisation and Neocolonialism:

Colonization and decolonization could be understood easily as that process is over and a post mortem is possible. But what about recolonization? This word entered the political discourse in the aftermath of Iraqi invasion by America. America of the 20 th century was not in favour of colonization. But in 21 st century doubts over its moves aimed at recolonization exists in peoples mind. Neo colonialism needs a fresh study.

Now we are one in India, and we cannot think Pondicherry in isolation from rest of India and its burning issues. We live in an area of free markets. You should remember that the drive to market their products and purchase our raw materials only opened the doors to colonial rule few centuries before. History is repeating in a different form. The export and import of toxic wastes justified in the name of

recycling is now one of the biggest threats to global environment. The import of toxic wastes by Third World countries is cause of grave concern. Take for example the Ship Building Yard at Alang in Gujarat. 350 ships are scrapped in India every year. According to Central Pollution Control Board 12,428 metric tons of hazardous and non hazardous waste is produced in Alang, which seriously affects soil, water and air.

Dr. Wishwas Rane of All India Drug Action had brought out a comprehensive guide called “Banned and Banable Drugs”. That guide lists out 23 out of 80 top selling drugs as irrational and hazardous”. While our country becomes dumping ground for hazardous pills banned in West, Indian Council for Medical Research has clearly established that a herbal product Vijaysar obtained from a bark of a tree *Pterocarpus marsupium* helps control blood glucose levels, yet it has to take off and enter the markets. Neocolonialism rules the roost, and we fail to resist recolonization by west which is trying to capture our medical market. You may be aware that the Suez Canal (1869) and Panama Canal (1915) Sethu Samudram Canal (1860) and Tenth Degree Canal have been mooted to create short navigational routes to bring prosperity to their respective regions and countries. The French initiative to build Siene_Norde Canal is an example for the keen interest evinced by developing countries to promote trade and overall development. You must go back to the pages of history to know that Thailand then known, as Siam is an enemy country of the British and an ally of the Japan during the World War II. On the conclusion of the Second World War II, one of

the last secretive acts performed by the colonial Government of India was the signing of a Peace Treaty with Siam (Thailand). A Peace Treaty between her Majesty's Government and the Government of India on one hand and the Kingdom of Siam on the other, on January 1, 1946 at the Government House Singapore. The signatories were for the Britain Mr. Moberly Denning, Political Adviser to Lord Louis Mountbatten, for Government of India Mr. M. S. Aney and for Siam (now Thailand) Prince Viwat Anajai Jaiyant, Lt. General Phya Abhai Songgram and Nai Serm Vinichayakul. This treaty contains 24 articles. Out of this Article 7 assumes importance in the context of this letter.

Article 7: Siam undertakes to construct no canal linking the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Siam (i.e. across the Kra Isthmus) without British consent. (Keesing's Contemporary Archives 1946-48 Vol VI, p 7695). This article had done great havoc to Indian shipping costing our nation billions of extra money by way of fuel imports, in view of shelving of the Tenth Degree Canal project with the imposition of a condition in this Peace Treaty. It has also blocked the economic prosperity of Thailand and held up the development process by half a century and more.

Government of India and Government of Thailand must look into the unfavorable conditions imposed by a colonial rule, that too at the threshold of a defeat in Second World War II on Thailand, an ally of Japan. It is in the interests of India and Thailand that a Canal be cut across the Isthmus of Kra where the isthmus narrows to just 75 miles and to

develop this canal vigorously so that a detour of 1500 nautical miles down the Malayan Coast via the Straits of Malacca and up the Gulf of Thailand in the South China Sea is avoided. The proposed Tenth Degree Canal will be an extension of the Tenth Degree channel in between Andaman and Nicobar islands. The opening of Tenth Degree canal will result in saving millions of tons of fuel for world shipping. The Tenth Degree canal reduces the importance of other major canals of the world namely Suez Canal and Panama Canal. The Tenth Degree Canal would develop Andaman & Nicobar Islands and bring prosperity to its economy.

But instead of thinking on these lines to develop Andaman Nicobar islands, the colonial mentality makes us think of bartering away 23 remote Lakshadweep and Andaman islands to foreigners. In Kerala people had to resist moves to hand over rivers to multinationals. This how our Moghul rulers, Sultans, Nawabs, Nayaks and other Indian kings opened the doors to colonialism in yesteryears. Let not our soil become a breeding ground for neocolonialism. Let us not welcome recolonisation.

“COOLIE” FROM FRENCH INDIA TO CARIBBEAN

“Jahaji Bhai” is a documentary film with an Urdu title, which means brothers of the ship. These are not sailors of the same boat as the English idiom indicates but literally are slaves taken away in the same ship. These are bonded labour taken 167 years ago in ships to erstwhile colonies of the Caribbean region. Suresh Kumar Pillai had tried to capture their miseries in this documentary on a totally forgotten peoples. Why did people from India go to Caribbean’s? The historical necessity arrives with the abolition of slavery in the nation ruled by white colored people. After the black race got reprieve from slavery, to work in the sugar plantations Indians from Chota Nagpur areas, mostly tribal people were lured into.

The first ship left Calcutta in February 1838 and reached Guyana on May 5 th 1838. There were 420 hill coolies, as they were called; out of which 50 are women and 10 children. Many succumbed to diseases in mid way and those who reached there had either to perish under stress and strain within the 5-year contract period or to be killed for so called violations. In fact many ships went missing and no one was there to shed a single drop of tear. If an Indian coolie absented for 7 days he was fined \$24 dollars, which is equivalent to 6 months wages. These Indians lost their roots and culture. While liberated Negro slaves climbed in the social ladder, Indians filled that vacuum at the rock bottom of society. They were induced to become addicts to alcoholism. With

few women around polyandry became the order of the day. Africans joined Europeans to suppress the brown race. Picturing their everyday lives and showing lot of documentary proof with regard to their plight from various sources, Suresh Kumar Pillai in this documentary records an unknown chapter on Indian migration. Ravi Dev, Leader of the Roar Guyana Movement speaks for his fellow brethren and a 103 old man tries hard to recollect his fellow passengers of the ship that carried them from India, all shown in the documentary.

While British India stopped labour supply due to awareness and campaigns, French India provided a fertile ground for hunting neo-slaves. Suresh Kumar Pillai had shot another documentary on these pathetic brethren. "Songs of Malabarais" is a film on coolie migration from Pondicherry and its enclaves towards Caribbean sugar plantations. All South Indians are called as Malabarais or Madrasis it must be remembered. The French recruited the labourers mainly from Pondicherry, Karaikal, Chandranagore and Mahe and between 1854 and 1920 around 50,000 Indian labourers were taken to Guadeloupe and Martinique to work as coolies. It should be stressed that only Mahakavi Bharathiar immortalized the woes of the sugar plantation labourers in his poem "karumbu thottathile". No one else bothered about our unfortunate kinsmen.

The Indian labourers in French colonies had to face stiff resistance from the Africans because the Indians had to work for paltry pittance, which freed Africans refused to

comply. Thus Indians occupied the lowest of the low position in the French Caribbean society and called as “Cooli Malabarise” or “Chappa Coolies”. Indian coolies were never allowed to practice their religious faiths or to speak their native tongues on the plantations. The labourers had to be French in every sense. This was in sharp contrast to other Dutch colony of Suriname or British colony of Trinidad and Guyana where the Indians had some amount of freedom to retain their language and culture. The film looks at the history of migration of Indians to French West Indies and their struggle to retain their religion and culture against the French policy of assimilation.

Suresh Kumar Pillai holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Mass Communication along with fifteen years journalistic experience in print and electronic media. “Once More Removed”, a documentary film on 19th century migration of an Indian family from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to Caribbean for HBO Documentaries USA is another memorable documentary. “The Song of Malabaries” for Nederland based OHM media network was telecast on Nederland National Television Channel in June 2004. Mr. Pillai also researched, wrote, shot, produced and directed a three 50 minutes documentary series Jahaji Bhai on the Indian communities in Guyana and Trinidad under own banner Trikkon Image Systems. The film was widely circulated and telecast in several TV stations in Caribbean and India 2003

With documentaries like these screened in Dutch and French televisions to his credit Suresh Kumar Pillai has set his eyes on a

sleepy village called Arikamedu in the suburbs of Pondicherry. Arikamedu, the site of archeological excavations, which had established Pondicherry's connections with Roman Empire in pre-Christian era, had caught his imagination and Pillai rented a house and is living for 6 months and more to collect artifacts for his film. In that process he wants to set up a site museum there. Mr.K.K.Chakravarthy Secretary to Union Government and Director General National Museum New Delhi recently in a meeting of scholars convened by Department of Arts and Culture Government of Pondicherry expressed the desire for landscaping and recreating the past to draw tourists to our museums. Professor Kishore K.Basa Director of Indra Gandhi Rastriya Manav Sangrahalaya Bhopal stressed the need to promote archaeological tourism. And Mr.Pillai's dream to start a private museum to promote Arikamedu falls under the categories advised by these scholarly bureaucrats.

While working on his current dream project Mr. Suresh Kumar Pillai had done right thing to draw our attention towards the descendants of those survived Indian indentured migrants today who form a significant ethnic minority in the larger Black Caribbean world known variously as East Indians, Indo-Caribbean, and West Indians. The people of Indian origin spread across several island nations such as Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Grenada, Barbados, and St. Vincent, St. Lucia and in South American countries like Guyana and Surinam. "The extraordinary cultural fusion that took place in the New World, a grand meeting place of

four great civilizations - Amerindians, Indians, Africans and Europeans gave birth to some unique social, cultural and religious practices which are traditional in its content but western in its formal expressions” says Suresh Kumar Pillai in his introductory note on the film. Film after film he has set noble tasks and the awareness he generates by such documentaries reach abroad.

The New Indian Express-weekend
(11.06.2005)

ROMAIN ROLLAND LIBRARY: 177-OLD TREASURE TROVE

Nandhivarman

Professor of literature at the French Lyce'e of Pondicherry M. Bourdat, while writing on reconstruction of history, is candid in admitting that "it would be tedious to revel exclusively in stones and inscriptions. There remain texts, not only livelier than stones but often valuable monuments themselves." To look into these texts there cannot be a better place than the Library named after French Scholar Roman Rolland, a close friend of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Romaine Rolland Library, next to Pondicherry News, is a treasure trove of knowledge, with 3, 38,304 books in its possession this heritage of Pondicherry that enables "a stimulating contact with manuscripts" and its possessions must be preserved. The care that is taken towards buildings and the money that flows towards architecture related projects must be diverted to knowledge -based projects and preserving of the rare manuscripts. But fortunately, it is the French Institutions that are still working in the right directions, whereas government Institutions have wakeup to the demands of times only recently.

National Mission for Manuscript has launched a week -long campaign beginning November 2004 digitalizing history. 5000 surveyors at the rate of 50 per districts will be combing 100 districts spread across various states to

search for manuscripts. Susdha Gopalakrishnan, Director of the Mission, says, "At the end of their efforts, there will be no manuscript that the mission would not have digitalized." "All districts of Karnataka and Orissa are lucky to be included in the mission. The other states have missed the bus in the South.

After the private initiative of Tamizh Thatha Uve Swaminathan Iyer, there have been no governmental efforts to collect rare manuscripts in Tamil. Now that UDA Government had declared Tamil as classical language efforts to add Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry into this 100 district's list must be taken up.

Many century old palm-leaf manuscripts still remain in certain homes, before all could be lost they should be digitalized, says Era Thirumurugan of the Tamil Development Action Group, Pondicherry.

"To begin with we have to reinvent our history by preserving the rare collection of books in the Roman Rolland Library. Around 27,000 rare collections of books are there in Roman Rolland Library or, to be precise, it should be so, through the task of tracing the missing and damaged books, computers, is on. "says Murugappan, information officer.

OUT OF 3, 38,304 books in the Library Tamil section has 1, 20,000 books and English literature about 1, 75,000. In the reference section 22,300 books and in the children's library have 40,000. Through the mobile service, 3000 books are reaching the

reading public. The Government of Pondicherry provides, every year, Rs. 4 to 6 lakh of funds. And the new purchases for the year 2003-2004 is 4254 books.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library foundation of Kolkatta has so far provided 18,422 books under non matching scheme free of cost. "Efforts must be taken to reach out to various other similar foundation s abroad to get books free for enlightening the knowledge," says A.Arivunambi, Head of the department of Tamil at Pondicherry University.

It appears that out of existing 3.00.000 books around 45.000 books have to be declared condemned books and replaced. The 54 branch libraries in Pondicherry have 4.30,000 books out of which 35,000 books are t5o be condemned. Existing books are too facing threats from insects and the entire Library must be centrally air conditioned along with periodical chemical and other treatments to keep bookworms and other insects away. Years of neglect had come to an end with the Aegean stables being cleared under the dynamic vision of BV Selvaraj, Secretary, Arts & Culture, with the assistance of N Sumathi.

The heritage of a town is not all of its buildings. It is the priceless manuscripts, inscriptions, archaeological artifacts, copper plates, tombstones, rock art, folklore and paintings that is preserved in museums and libraries that brings to light many hidden facts about heritage. If a country or town falls to protect its books and rare manuscripts whatever recorded history is present till date will be lost.

The Library movement in Pondicherry began with the Bibliotheque on May 1, 1827. The library initially was near the railway station, and then later shifted to Roman Rolland Street where the mind was functioning. Next to Raj Niwas in the current location it functions from 1974. With the advent of age of information and technology after 177 years this library is planning to digitalize books, manuscripts and all information and placing them on the internet for the scrutiny of one and all.

In Pondicherry, fortunately, many French books have been housed in the Roman Rolland Library. In the post-merger phase with India, the replacement of French for English led to the neglect of that language and its rare collection of books. Catalogue General, a compilation of rare books in Roman Rolland Library written by Madame Yvonne Robert Gaebele and published by Pondicherry Government in 1960, is yet to see a reprint or update. "Despite humidity, the parasites and the casualness in the treatment of the volumes precious editions have survived," says Bourdat in his book 18th Century Pondicherry.

Till very recently, there had been no librarian with the knowledge of French and decades of ignorance French books in the Library has led to lot of loss to priceless books. The newly inducted assistant, who knows French, is courteous and helps researches with adequate information. Not only was that, many valuable manuscripts handed over to National Archives unnecessarily, instead of being preserved

here. After decades of neglect the current Librarian Murugappan had started to put the house in order, admits rising expectations from research scholars.

Courtesy:9th October 2004 New Indian Express

TREASURE TROVE OF HISTORY

Nandhivarman

A foreigner in a coffee house chat says” The National Archives at Pondicherry contains invaluable information, mostly in French, about the slave trade that flourished during the French colonial rule and it is highly pathetic that, in spite of the fact that most Tamil scholars here know French as fluently as Tamil, they don’t consult the Archives nor write about the dark pages of Pondicherry’s history.”

When this was told to Tamil scholars they asked, where is the National Archives?” This surprised reaction is quite understandable because the National Archives Record Centre for South Zone, the only one of its kind for all southern states, remains inaccessible with bad, narrow roads and in a remote, unknown locality.

The Pondicherry Government had, in the past, been vigilant enough to get projects for the Union Territory. The National Archives of India Record Centre came into existence because of an agreement between the Pondicherry Government and the Centre from July 1, 1979. The collections here are of immense value to historians.

The French had a system called ‘ Archives Sous Verres.’ This literally means ‘Archives between the Glasses.’ Many records pertaining

to the period 1701-1860, are placed in between glasses with the edges sealed with band, and such records have earned the name as 'Archives between the Glasses.' "These documents are stray letters in French, Tamil, Telugu and Hindustani, which are correspondences between Ananda Ranga Pillai and Sambhudas Sankaradoss, a merchant from Madras," says Anandaraj, assistant director of the Archives. "Ananda Ranga Pillai's Diaries have become the prime source of information of history. Even his letters are a source of information of historical facts."

Ananda Ranga Pillai was entrusted with the task of procuring the essential commodities for French India. For this he corresponded with many native rulers. These letters throw light on the system of banking during the 18th century. It reveals that Govardan Das, Kasi Das Bukhanji and Vallabha Sundar were carrying out banking operations in Pondicherry.

The reach of the Marwari entrepreneurship could be traced. The southern equals to the Marwari money-leaders were the Chettiars. The modus operandi of three money leaders. Meluguri Chetty, RayaTayyan and Guntur Balli Chetty were available in these letters, pointing to study of Pondicherry's economy in the 18th century.

Sambudas Sankaradas, apart from acting as a trader for procuring various commodities for Ananda Ranga Pillai, also spied on the British to help the French. He secretly reported the passage of English ships from Basra at Madras Port and of the movement of Maratha

armies in Decan. Such espionage activities come to light through these letters.

Another valuable treasure that remains in the national archives is the Etat Civil, which was the Civil Registry from 1676 to 1885. The missionaries introduced the registering of births in 1676. Marriages were also registered from 1687. But the Dutch occupation of Pondicherry left an interregnum from 1693 to 1699 when work was suspended. The register only covered the French, the topas who are progenies of a mixed race and the converted Hindus. The ordinance of January 31, 1824, ordered registers to be opened for births, deaths and marriages of natives at Pondicherry, Villianur, Bahour, Mahe, and Yenam. This arrangement continued till 1855, on April 24, 1880 the registration was made applicable to natives. All such records of this period are of immense help to many who would like to trace there ancestral roots.

The records of a unique legal system practiced by the French between 1703 and 1889, called Tribunal de la Chaudrie, are of great interest to researchers of law. Tribunal de la Chaudrie, otherwise called Choultry Court introduced in 1724 was meant for the deliverance of justice to the native population, according to their own laws and customs.

From the archival records a legal history for nearly 86 years available. Severe penalties were imposed by these choultry courts, like the mutilation of ears, slavery in the islands of Bourbon (Island of Reunion) and Isle de France (Mauritius), fines, confiscations, whipping and banishment from the territory.

Even now, the places where these Choultry Courts functioned bear the suffix Chavadi, like Pillaichavadi, Mudaliarchavadi.

Many valuable palm manuscripts are also preserved at the National Archives, including the Naadi sastra of Tirumoolar. THE Grammar Yaperungalam, Thathuva Kattalai, Pattinathar Madal, Vaithya Sastram, Agasthiar Nooru and Nadantha Saram are some of the rare manuscripts preserved here.

JBP More, a social scientist from France who recently visited the National Archives, said the old records must be digitalized and brought out in CD form. It should be made available online for downloads to researchers from abroad. Digitalization and CD ROMs will go a long way in bringing to light such invaluable historical information.

Courtesy: New Indian Express:20th August 2005

MYSTICS AND MEN OF MEDICINE

Siddhars were mystics and men of medicine. They cured many incurable diseases in their lifetime and left behind philosophies guiding people on goals to attain in life. They also left a rich volume of literature behind, which calls for focused research and understanding.

A Reader in Tamil at Pondicherry University, Dr Illamathi Janakiraman, has undertaken the task. She will be compiling a Dictionary on Sidha Literature under a three- year project sponsored by the University Grants Commission. Two years are over and she is now into the final phases of her work. This dictionary will go a long way in enriching the knowledge of Tamil about Siddhars, their literary contributions and their system of medicine.

Dr Illamathi Janakiraman is a physically challenged lady with a state Award from Social Welfare Board for her tireless struggle to carve a niche for her in literature. She has 13 books to her credit. On yoga, she had written 'Perinba Peruvazhu.' Her book 'Siddargalam Samooga Paarvaiyam' falls under social history. She has presented the philosophy of Siddhars and their worldviews in the book 'Siddharagalin Chinthanaigal.' She is also a feminist writer. Her book 'Penniyam Pesa' won the Pondicherry Government's 'Kamban Pugazh Award' for the year 2003-2004.

With such credentials to back her, her book on Siddhars would be something to watch out

for.Tamil Siddhars, 18 in all, traced 4,448 different diseases and prescribed medicines in the form of herbs, roots, salts, metals and mineral compounds. It is possible that they knew about AIDS too. It was called 'Vettai Noi.'

Siddha system is based on hypothetical and biological laws of nature. The Siddhars were pioneers in the study of minerals, metals, and medicinal herbs. They found out the method of processing metals, minerals, herbs and natural raw materials to make churnams, chenthurams and leyhams.

They classified Vettai Noi into 21 types, most of which are caused by depletion of the Prana and / or Ojas through excess indulgence and abuse of the body, rendering the immune system weak and susceptible to pathogens.

They recommended the following herbs for the effective treatment of Vettai Noi. 1. Arugumpul, (Cynodon Dactylon Pers.) 2. Karisalinkanni (Eclipta Alba Hassk) 3. Musukkai (mukai scavrillia) 4. Thoodhovali (Solanum Trilobatum Linn) 5. Jeeragam (Luminum Cyminum).

Other Siddha medicines that could be prescribed under medical supervision and administered for AIDS as supportive therapy are as follows: 1. For purification of blood: Kanthaga Rasayanam, Parangi Pattai Churam, Palakaria Parpam. 2. For reducing fever: Linga Chenduram, Gowri Chinthamani, Thirikadugu Churnam, Rama Banam, Vadha, Piththa, Kaba Sura Kudineer. 3. for persistent diarrhea: Thair Sundi churnam, Kavika

churnam, Amaiodu Parpam. 4. Revitalizers and rejuvenators to the disabled immune system of the body: Orilai ThamaraiKarpam, Serankottai leyham, Ammukkara. 5. Antiviral drugs: Rasagandhi, Masikai, Edi Vallathathy mezhugu, murukavinthu, masikai, edi vallathy mezhugu 6. Restoration of the disturbed mind: Vallarai. The medications rasagandhi mezhugu, Amukkara churnam and Nellikkai lehyam are effective for HIV/AIDS patients who do not have overt neural HIV. Drugs that control opportunistic infections compliment these.

The medicinal system of Siddhars is one subject that had to be intensively researched into. There literature is another subject that had to be studied in depth.

Tamil Scholar Thiru Vi Ka called them men with scientific temper. Even after their demise, their samadhis continue to attract lot of people. Usually if a Siddhar attains Jeevasamathi, over that samathi the idols of Hindu pantheon of Gods are erected. The famous Palani Temple is the Samadhi of Bogar, a Siddhar who made the idol of Lord Muruga out of Navapashanam.i.e nine poisons.

The medicinal cures offered by the navapashanam idol are one of the reasons for continued stream of visitors to Palani Murugan temple. In Pondicherry, Manakula Vinayagar temple overflows with crowd on all days of the year, and the reason here too, may be the Thonnai Kaathu siddhar.

In a research thesis for Mr. Phil submitted by V. Sivamathi, under the guidance of Dr Ilamathi Janakriraman, titled “Manakula Vinayagar” , it is stated that Thollai Kaathu Siddhar came all the way from Murattandichavadi every day to Pondicherry to have a dip in the sea and rest near the Manarkulam, pond of sand. One day, on hearing an inner voice, he embarked upon the task to construct the temple of Vinayakar. His samathi is there within the temple, as is the case of all siddhars and their samathis. The statue of Thollai Kaathu Siddhar is within the premises of Manakula Vinayakar Temple. The Temple is famous but its famous founder is unknown to most that throng there.

Courtesy: New Indian Express: 28th May 2005

CHEVALIER MADANAKALYANI

Nandhivarman

The French Government had conferred the prestigious title Chevalier dans L'Ordre des Palmes Académiques on Madanakalyani Shanmuganandan who recently retired after 41 years of service as Professor of Tamil in the French College called Lysee Francaise. She has a lengthy list of publications to her credit on a variety of subjects, but she is hailed particularly for her translations.

Translating without losing the essence of what said in the original language is a risky adventure. Our first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, was to lay the foundation stone for the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. For that function the confusion created by translation is written in the book *The Constitution and Language Politics of India* by Wing Commander BVR Rao. The book narrates the incident thus;

“The authorities got a Hindi translation from All India Radio Hindi expert. Since President Prasad was to lay the foundation stone, they wanted to be sure of the correctness of the translation. They asked the Government of India Hindi expert to give a translation and they found it to be different from what was given by the AIR Hindi expert. The officials concerned were worried since they did not want the President, himself a Hindi expert, to criticize them for a wrong translation and

therefore decided to request the President himself to give the translation. When the officials received it, it was different from what was given by the other two Hindi experts.”

If translation could cause so much confusion, one must understand the difficulties encountered by translating poetry from Tamil to French and classics from French to Tamil. In that difficult task Madanakalyani had scored, winning the prestigious Chevalier award, which speaks about her efficiency.

For instance the French college had brought out a beautiful book translated from French to Tamil by Madanakalyani. Puthucheri: Oruvanigathala oorin varalaaru (History of Pondicherry a Mercantile city]

It is a remarkable book and its value is not being understood in the Library circles of Pondicherry. “Only 27 copies of this monumental treatise have been bought.” Madana kalyani says with anguish. If a noteworthy publication on Pondicherry has no takers, it means, while the whole world is moving to watch History channels, among Pondicherrians the interest in history is on the wane. She had translated the Tamil folk songs of Pondicherry into French, a few of which had been chosen and included among the meritorious poems in French in the year 1998.

The book Britannicus by French dramatist Racine was translated into Tamil in 1974, titled as Veezhchi. At the same time, Madana kalyani is to translate Tamil works into French, out of abundant love for her mother tongue. The folk stories in circulation in and

around Pondicherry were translated into French and printed in France titled *Contes de Pondiche'ry*. That book carried the Tamil version of the folk songs too. Her remarkable popularity, we can mention with certainty is due to her translation of *La Peste* written by the Nobel Laureate Albert Camus.

She had translated Bharathiar's poems in 1982 under the patronage of the Government of Pondicherry. In 1988 she contributed to the translation of *Siruthondar Puranam*. Continuing her efforts, by 1999 she had also been involved in translating *Sakkier Puranam*. The stories of *Vikramadithiya*, Indian folk stories and *Bharathidasan's* poems were also rendered into French.

She had brought into Tamil the *Stories of Statues in Pondicherry*, the poems of Poet *Baudelaire*, *Victor Hugo*, *La Fontaine*, *Apollinaire* and *Rimbaud*. She also wrote a series in a local Tamil daily for 80 days about simplified ways to learn French.

Prema Nandakumar, in her commentary on the Tamil translation of Nobel Laurette Albert Camus, says, "Let not Tamil lament over their failure to get the Nobel Prize. Even if few books are written how it should be deeply written without deviating from pragmatism, and how effectively it could illuminate the inner streams of human thought must be learnt by reading the work of Albert Camus. Madanakalyani with responsibility had done a great service."

Such tribute to her translation places Madanakalyani one among the top literary

scholars of Pondicherry. She is also the joint Secretary of Puthuvai Tamil Sangam, having assisted its activities for too long a period. The title Chevalier conferred on Shivaji Ganesan made it as popular as Padma Bhushan.”

In Pondicherry there lives humble woman Chavalier who had not caught the due attention of feminist writers and media. It is high time that the women litterateurs of Tamil Nadu give due recognition for Madanakalyani,” says Tamil research scholar in charge of Bharathiar Museum Dr N Sengamala Thayer. Let us hail the free flow of French. Tamil literary exchanges made possible by Madanakalyani.

Courtesy: New Indian Express: 6th November 2004

LOG IN, TO BE PREPARED

The internet provides a lot of information about natural disasters, and can help people in being forearmed. For that is being forearmed.

Time has come for including disasters management as part of our school curriculum. As disasters have become common, the news coverage is more on the plight of the victims but the thrust area of scientific protections and preparedness in hazards management are ignored.

In one way this could be explained. The question of who will bell the cat is a major stumbling block for predictions. If a scientist forewarns, immediately there are people to counter his views. Instead of expecting government agencies to wake up on time, people must be prepared to rise to the occasion with help of the media. In this field, various earthquake observatories of United States Geological Survey and that of many universities provide information, easily accessible to every one via internet.

Now we can have just observed International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction on OCTOBER 13 while we are surrounded by disasters. United Nations designated the second Wednesday of October every year from December 22, 1989 as International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction and called it as a vehicle to promote a global culture of natural

disaster reduction, including disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

EXPLANATION

_ Divergent plate boundaries- where new crust is generated as the plates pull away from each other.

-Convergent plate boundaries- where crust is consumed in the Earth's interior as one plate dives under another.

-Transform plate boundaries- where crust is neither produced nor destroyed as plate's side horizontally past each other.

-Plate boundary zones- Broad belts in which deformation is diffuse and boundaries are not well defined.

Selected prominent hotspots

In pursuance of this, we have to evaluate various measures suggested by United Nations, scientific observatories, various countries and their experiences to evolve right methods for facing natural hazards. It is here the lessons and play tools crafted by the United States Geological survey assume significance. They not only educate people about current earthquakes through animation pictures taken from observatories but also prepare them to be mentally prepared to face calamities.

What we now witness is quakes along the collision lines of continental plates. Exactly

what drives plate tectonics is not known. One theory's that convection within the Earth's mantle pushes the plates, in much the same way that air heated by your body rises upward and is deflected sideways when it reaches the ceiling. Another theory is that gravity is pulling the older, colder, and thus heavier, ocean floor with more force than the newer, lighter sea floor. Whatever drives the movement, plate tectonic activity takes place at four types of boundaries; divergent boundaries, where new crust is formed; convergent boundaries, where crust is consumed; collision boundaries, Where two land masses collide; and transform boundaries, where two plate slide against each other, according to the site www.enchantedlearning.com.

Another truth that researchers are revealing is that the Earth's longest mountain chain is not the Andes in South America, or the Himalayas in Asia, or even North America's Rockies. It's an underwater chain of mountains 47,000 miles long.

The Chain runs down the middle of the Atlantic Ocean [surfacing at Iceland]. AROUND Africa, through the Indian Ocean, between Australia and Antarctica, and north through the Pacific Ocean, Running along the top of this chain of mountains is a deep crack, called a rift valley. It is here that new ocean floor is continuously created. As the two sides of the mountain move away from each other, magma swells up from the Earth's interior. It then solidifies into rock as it is cooled by the sea, creating new ocean floor.

The speed at which new ocean floor is created varies from one location on the ocean ridge to another. Between North America and Europe. The rate is about 2.2 inches [(3.6) per year. At the East Pacific rise, which is pushing a plate into the west coast of South America, the rate is 12.6 inches (32.2) per year. With detailed mapping of the ocean floor came many observations that led scientists like Howard Hess and R DEIZAt to call the new theory as 'Sea floor Spreading.'

Among the features that supported the sea-floor spreading hypothesis were mid oceanic ridges. deep sea trenches, island arcs, geomagnetic patterns, and fault patterns. "The deepest waters are found in oceanic trenches, which plunge as deep as oceanic trenches, which plague as deep as 35,000 feet below the ocean surface. These trenches are usually long and narrow, and run parallel to and near the oceans margins. They are often parallel to large continental mountain ranges. Like the mid-oceanic ridges, and that the age of the ocean floor increased in addition, it has been determined that the oldest seafloor often ends in the deep-sea trenches."

The Western Pacific margin has islands such as the Aleutians, Knurliest, Japan, Ruckus, Philippines, Marianas, Indonesia, Solomon's, New Hebrides, and the Tonga's, which can be best described as 'Island arcs' and usually situated along deep sea trenches situated on the continental side of the trench. All these and many more new findings which could be read from various web sides provide A to Z information on all natural phenomena along with projections for natural disasters ahead.

On hearing news about natural disasters, students could log onto these web sites and find relevant information to forewarn the people. For instance it must be noted that on the day of Pakistan and Kashmir Quake, there were 177 quakes all over the world., They may be low on the Richter scale, but earth is uneasy and if the quake is in the boundary of Indo-Australian plate as in the recent case one can forewarn the route it may take in due course of time's

Courtesy: New Indian Express: 15th October 2005

TO PRESERVE VILLUPAATTU, A FOLK ART FORM

A school girl dances at a public function. The next day she is bound to receive a surprise mail appreciating her dance.

Soon after a state honour has been conferred on a scholar a mail lauding his work will land in his house.

Yes, there is one person in Pondicherry who rejoices at everyone's achievement. This trait of 73- year -old Kalaimamani Pattabiraman has earned him a unique place in people's minds. Working to preserve the folk art, Villupattu, Pattabiraman has injected into its contents government schemes like family planning and maintaining a clean, hygienic environment.

This multifaceted poet and singer also teaches French to those who aspire to learn. Mr. Qureshi, from Maharashtra, who picked up French with ease under the guidance of Pattabiraman was deeply impressed by his teacher and openly lauds him as "living, eternal example of simple living, high thinking, and effective, practical teaching."

Pattabiraman is known for his Villupattu. The title Villisai Vendar conferred on him speaks about his zeal in preserving this folk tradition for the past 36 years through his tireless performances. The greatness of Tamil music lies in converting even stone pillars into musical instruments. Playing on a bow shaped

instrument the singer narrates a story in songs interwoven with prose, along with messages and morals for society, creating a melodious and pleasant musical story that came to be known as the Villupattu.

In his book, History of South Indian Carnatic Music from Vedic Times, Rangaramanuja Iyengar states, "The basic culture of the peninsular South is that of the Tamil language and its civilization. It is reflected in every aspect of life in the three regions of Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala. Carnatic music is the common heritage of the entire region. Though the major contribution came from Tamil there is no conflict in theory or practice. Ipso facto the instinct to draw music out of even granite is in evidence all over the South."

This last line deserves special mention and attention. The greatness of the musical achievement of the Dravidian states deserves world recognition. To extract music out of stone is one of the note worthy cultural gifts for which we owe our thanks to sculptors.

In the Kumbakonam Kumbeswarar temple, and at Azwar Thirunagari, we can find a "Nadasawaram" made out of stone. The pillars of temples situated at Azaharkoil, Madurai, Azhwar Tirunagari, Tirunelveli, Susheendiram, Kalakkadu, Tiruvananthapuram, Tirupathi, Tadipathri, Lepakshi, Hampi and many other places of the South are capable of echoing musical notes.

Haling from such a rich culture and legacy, it will not be surprising to find weapon shaped musical instrument indicating the inner urge

of a highly civilized society that wants weapons too to eschew violence and produce music. The traditional musical instrument of the Tamils was yazh and the singers of that instrument are known as Yazpaanar, and Yazhpaanam is a territory in Sri Lanka. There were 18 kinds of 'Yazh'that prevailed for centuries all over the region.

Yazh is a musical instrument that was popular even from the pre-historic period. Vipulananda Adigalar in his "Yazh Nool" mentions a variety of yazh known as Villyazh, i.e. yazh made in the shape of a bow. Villyazh had strings but the later day Vill did not have any string. Justice Maharajan, a renowned Tamil scholar, mentions Sathur Pichaikutty as one who laid the foundations for the emergence of Villupaatu. The great comedian Kalaivanar N.S Krishnan popularized Villu pattu and the story of Gandhi Mahan in villupaatu performed in radio by him deserves special mention. There are some more noteworthy artistes like Kuladeivam Rajagopal, S.S.Rajendran, Sevalkulam Thangayya, Nelvalai Narayanadas, Mamsapuram Baludravidan, Madathur Arunachalam, Selliah, Kovai Muruganantha Bharathy, Kanchipuram Panjatcharam, and Muthu Ganesan as mentioned by Villisai Venthar Pattibiraman in his book Isai Thantha Isai.

The high pitched voice of S.S. Rajendiran, known as Latchiya Nadigar [Actor with Ideals]. and his dramatic talent created an everlasting impact on Kalaimamani given by the Government of Pondicherry. The South Zone Cultural Centre, which wanted to promote this

folk art, has accepted Pattabiraman as a traditional guru and provides Assistance.

The high pitched voice of S.S Rajendiran, known as Latchiya Nadikar [Actor with Ideals] and his dramatic talent created an everlasting impact on Kalaimamani Pattabiraman who started to tread in his footsteps. It has earned him many awards like the Kalaimamani given by the Government of Pondicherry. The South Zone Cultural Centre, which wanted to promote this folk art, has accepted Pattabiraman as traditional guru and provides assistance.

He also has many books to his credit. Varumaiyai Ozhippom., Padithan Parungalen, Vaarungal Malaysiavuku, Pillaigale Ungalukkaga and Sathigal Illaiyada are some of his books. A teacher who won the National award for the best teacher from then President R Venkataraman in 1986, he is spreading this folk art under the guru-shishya parambara scheme. His voice can be heard in most of the government and school functions here. Yet his humanistic nature, the abundant love he has for his kinsmen and the social concern that finds expression in his poetry have won him many friends who call him the noblest citizen of Pondicherry.

Courtesy: New Indian Express: 11th September 2004

DRAMA ON THE EXTINCTION ROUTE

Nandhivarman

A bilingual bard with a Lenin style beard could be often seen as an active participant in all literary activities in Pondicherry. Meet the soft-spoken Nalla Kothandaraman, a post graduate, who had rubbed shoulders with stalwarts of Tamil theatre like TKS brothers and acted with actor Srikanth in many a drama in the second half of the 20th century.

That most cine stars of yester- years were products of Tamil drama stage can never be overstated, be it MGR, Sivaji Ganesan, SSR and Monorama, just to name a few. And the likes of Nalla Kothandaraman who lost out in the race to the silver screen are pulling out all stops to help Tamil drama pace with the needs of changing times.

The drama for all practical purposes is headed for extinction, the reason being an ever-increasing influence of television. Tele-serials no doubt are drama of the current times, but its content remains stuck in oft-repeated themes. Had Mahakavi Bharathiar been alive today, he would have surely called for integrating Tamil drama with Universal Theatre.

Such a dream to materialize calls for foolproof translations. There is a void here though, which needs to be filled. In Pondicherry, we have talent, but Tamils living elsewhere across

the globe are not giving Tamil scholars of Pondicherry their due, “says Miss N. Sumathy Director of Arts & Culture, Government of Pondicherry.

Kothandaraman alias Villiyan definitely deserves his due. Going by a wide array of his unpublished works, one could safely gauge his literary prowess. He had translated Eugene O’Neill’s trilogy titled Mourning becomes Electra. His three plays namely All Gods Children Have wings, Long Days Journey into Night and Before Break fast have been translated into Tamil, but yet to get published. The story repeats for George Bernard Shaw’s Arms& The Man, Apple Cart and Devils Disciple , and Rabindra Nath Tagore’ Sacrifice, Mukthdara, Chandalika, which now all stand translated in good Tamil. Similarly Anton Chekov’s Bear, Philip Freud’s Charles IV, Walter Macken’s, Mungo’s Mansten, Lois N. Parker’s, Monkey’s Paw, Rubert Brock’s Lithunia are readily available in script form, but sadly not in the print format.

Even though they have missed the print so far, still they could reach the masses just like the theatre. But this too is fraught with many a hurdle. The only theatre that finds a bit of support is theatre with castiest themes, whereas universal concepts and famous authors invariably get a short shrift. And purely because of this mindset, world-renowned authors and their literary products languish as these can not be successfully marketed and reach the common masses.

No wonder then, Kothandaraman with such a long list of unpublished scripts had translated

PG Wood house's novel Leave it to Psmith which is still waiting for its space in Tamil print media. Ditto for the translated novel of V K Subramaniam's titled Love A Bliss & Hell.

Kothandaraman so far has three books to his credit, including his poems in English with the title What Do we Care and a few other Tamil poems. But for the moment all that he desperately needs is public recognition, which so far has given him the slip.

Courtesy: New Indian Express: May 21 of 2005

Pleasant Blending of Painting and Dancing

N.Nandhivarman

A French girl driven by burning desire to gain proficiency in Tamil Dance came all the way from France to the erstwhile French colony of Pondicherry. Her quest did not end in disappointment when she found a choreographer to teach her the nuances of dance with perfection. Pondicherry Tamil Sangam, the cultural hub in the town one evening was stunned to listen a French girl speak in Tamil with her own accent and dance her way to their heart. The girl stood on a pot and performed the “Kuda koothu”, a dance form that is spoken in Tamil epic Silapathigaram. These dance forms were in vogue much before the time of Tamil epic Silapathikaram. The mythology says that a King Vanan, who got infuriated by the love affair between his daughter and the son of Love God Manmathan also known as Kaman, put him in a prison. Perhaps there was no POTA in those days may be POLA (Prevention of Love Act) existed.

To secure the release of Aniruthan, the son of Kaman, Lord Vishnu performed various peculiar dances known as “Vinotha Koothu” to distract the attention of the prison guard. The author of “Pancha Marabu” Arivanar and Saint Thirumangai Azhvar in Nalayira Thivya Prabantham mention about Kuda koothu. This type of dance is nowadays called Karagattam. The folk dancers also call it Paanai Karagam in Tamil. In Andhra Pradesh

this is called as Karagalu and Pooja-kunitha whereas in Karnataka its own version of pot dance is called as Puttakunitha. In Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Sikkim they have pot dances with different names in different regions. French girl Benedict Doe stayed in Murugan's house and learnt this dance in short duration. Murugan also teaches freely at the Tamil Sangam premises to students and had many stage performances to his credit all over India.

Those who had seen the late matinee idol M.G.Ramachandran and Padmini's dance sequence in film "Mannathimannan" will remember how difficult it is to draw some painting by calculated and measured footwork while performing dancing. Painting in Tamil is known as Chithiram and hence this dance form is known as Chithira natyam. The 16th century book written by Gangai Muthu Nattuvanar called Natanathi Vathiya Ranjanam narrates how this dance form emanated. At Thiruvalangadu a dance competition between Lord Shiva and Goddess Kaali took place and in that competition Lord Shiva performed Chithira Natyam. Lord Shiva had created 108 thandavas, i.e. dance variations to suit each and every occasion and in that 12 forms are unique. One of them is called "Uruthuba Thandava." and that thandava is Chithira Natyam.

In Epic Silappathigaram's chapter Arangetru Kaathai this dance is mentioned as Chithira Karnam. Panchamarabu speaks about Vinotha Koothu and one of its types is Chithira Natyam. Chithira Natyam has many varieties named after the pictures drawn by

footwork. In Radhabandam a dancer draws Temple Car, an Elephant in Gajabandham, a snake in Nagabandam, Eagle in Garuda Bandam, Elephant in Karikolam, Peacock in Mayurabandam, Lion in Simmabandam etc and these dances derived their names by the pictures drawn by the footwork of the danseuse. During 17 th century the Tanjore King Sagasi Maharaj in collaboration with a Poet Bharatha Kasinathan created a number of varieties of dances under the common title Vichithira Natiyam, that is peculiar dances. Thiagaraja Vinodha Chithra Prabandam and Sabdam Ennum Thala Sorkattu published by Thanjai Saraswathi Mahal speak about this dance under title Vichithra Natya Marabu.

These dances were performed in court of the Emperor's of Chola dynasty. They spread a Rathina Kambalam, floor mattress of silk and put soft and wet sand over it. While the dancers dance their foot impression will create the picture they want to present to our eyes. Murugan's students nowadays spread a sponge pad of 10 x 15 feet and pour ink over it. Then they cover it with a white cloth. While dance is performed the impression emerges. His disciple and impressive dancer Miss. L.R.Krishnamithra is also teaching dances freely at Tamil Sangam Pondicherry. She performs with ease these Chithira Natyam and dances on the top of a clay pot, on the top of a 2 glass tumblers etc, winning numerable fans.

Through dance Murugan spreads his message of National integration and resolve against terrorism. The songs composed for the dances choreographed by him, and translated into English and Hindi are woven together in one

dance titled National Procession to Abolish Terrorism and it is performed in 3 languages at the same time in succession. "We have forgotten our mother of United India after independence; in this occasion we have to gather to pray to Her to drive terrorism" so ends his appeal. But this traditional dance forms are adapted to inculcate apt messages of our times which is a laudable exercise. Reviving dances spoken in our epics and blending of dancing and painting in unique fashion highlights the greatness of the Tamil's past which is relived in present by numerous young dancers getting trained continuously as a stream by the Tamil Sangam under Murugan's and Krishnamithra's guidance. Miss Krishnamitra is a dancer who has lot of talent which had to reach the world stage. If that happens not only she will be famous, the world will know about the greatness of Tamil dances.

Courtesy: New Indian Express: 21st August 2004

NEW MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

Music through ages has seen many ups and downs. Many instruments faded away and new ones invented. "During the Sangam age and in 3rd century A.D the lifetime of Karaikal Ammaiyar we learn through her poems that there existed 21 musical instruments in Tamil Nadu. "Yazh" the prime musical instrument was prominent till 7th century A.D while Veena slowly captured its prime place. The Veena first found its mention in the Mootha Thirupathigam of Karaikal Ammaiyar and Thirugnanasambandar's Thevaram. "Yazh " type of musical instruments still exists having emanated during the time of old Greek, Egyptian and Sumerian civilizations. Whereas in Tamil Nadu Yazh disappeared. Vipulananda Adigal who wrote Yazh Nool and Abraham Pandithar who wrote Karunamirtha Sagaram much before him have written how Yazh vanished from circulation but they have not stated why it disappeared and have not cited reasons." Laments Professor A.S.Gnanasambandan, a great Tamil researcher. But P.T.R.Kamala Thigarajan in his book Isai thamizhin Unmai Varalaru had explained valid reasons.

"The biography of Thirugnanasambandar marks an important stage in the development of the concept of gamaka and incidentally of the fretted veena. The strings of the yazh were tuned to the shruthi of the notes of suddha scales. Since it was plain instrument there were no provision to manipulate the grace and quarter tones figuring in megharaga kurinchi" explains Dr.Premalatha in her Doctoral thesis

Music through Ages. These observations of researchers in music give us a clear picture with valid reasons for the disappearance of Yazh as prime instrument in Tamil musical world.

On how Veena developed and gained prominence, Dr.V.Premalatha says "From the description it is evident that Veena that was common during the time of King Harsha was an instrument with open strings like the bow-shaped harp. Therefore in the technique of Veena playing in the early stage the plectral technique was developed. This plectral technique by fingers of one or two hands continued till the time of Sarangadeva of 13 th century. It was only after Ramamatya of 16 th century constructed the modern Veena that Veena playing involved both plectral technique as well as manipulation of the strings by the fingers of the left hand". So researchers have explanations on how certain instruments disappear and how new instruments make its appearance and undergo changes during passage of times.

In our time we have an innovator in Pondicherry S.Gopakumar who had invented a percussion instrument and named it as Arumughanam. Arumughanam is more or less an Mrudangam but of six individual pieces, assembled together in half circled frame. It is easy to fix or unfix these heads. Out of these six faces one serves as Toppi. In the ancient Tamil musical treatise Koothanoole the great scholar of those ages have mentioned about 9 faced Muzhavu. From one to nine faces they had musical instruments, but all lost in ravages of time. And our Gopakumar, on

whom the Government of Pondicherry had conferred the prestigious Kalaimamani award for 2003-2004, had invented Arumughanam earning the praise of scholars.

Padma Vibushan Dr.M.Balamuralikrishna in his tribute to the innovator says as follows tracing his ancestry to achievements." It is well known to all musicians of South India that Mullamoodu Bhagavatas were musicians, hereditarily attached to the Royal court of Maharaja Swathi Thiunaal of Travancore, a king among composers. Members of this Mullamoodu family like Thiru Manikutti Bhagavata and Thiru Pichandi Bhagavata continued music as their career, both performing and teaching, they being vocalists, violinists or mrudangists. The latter's grandson Thiru. S.Gopakumar working as Mrudangam Lecturer in Bharathiar Palkalaikoodam Pondicherry is a good mrudangam player and teacher but also an innovator. I witnessed his recent innovation, a new percussive instrument named as Arumughanam and appreciate his skills, noteworthy," says Dr.Balamurali Krishna.

"This is a percussive instrument with six faces placed on a seat of semi circle resembling the rising sun with its rays surging upward. On the players left side is the first face, which will be in low pitch. It is being called dommugham because it produces rhythmic syllable "dom". The second face, which produces the syllable "tha", is called thamugham, which raises a high pitch. The musical note madhyama sounded in third face and it is called madhyamam. Fourth face is Tara shadjam, which is known as Dheemmugham because

the rhythmic syllable "dheem" is produced. The musical note panchama, the perfect fifth is produced in pamugham, which is the fifth face known as panchamam. Madya sthayi shadja comes out of 6 th face called as samugham. This percussion instrument can be used for solo or can be played with thalavathiyam, classical music and folk music. For both classical and folk dance this can be played with western instruments" says Kalaimamani Gopakumar. Innovations are welcome at all times and innovators need recognition in their lifetime. Thiru. Gopakumar is lucky with Government of Pondicherry Arts and Culture Department Director Miss N.Sumathy encouraging his performances through various programmes in and around Pondicherry while Kalaimamani title conferred recently proves his achievement.

Courtesy: The New Indian Express-weekend-
6.11.2004

EARTH QUAKES, TSUNAMIS AND CONTINENTAL DRIFT

N.Nandhivarman

Tsunami hit Pondicherry recently and people were taken aback at its ferocity. The least expected unfolding of the Nature's fury has stirred a debate on the changes in our coastline. Why did it happen and how it happened are subjects of current debate. Earth's surface rests divided into 12 plates. Now the 13th plate is in the offing. Throughout history scientists believe continents to be drifting, moving closer, or breaking from one another. Pangaea, the most recent super-continent on Earth began to break 160 million years ago. Paul Hoffman, Professor of Geology at Harvard University opines that while Pangaea broke up the Atlantic Ocean opened splitting North America from Eurasia. Then North America parted from Eurasia subsequently South America from Africa, Australia, Antarctica and India separated from Africa creating the Indian Ocean. The same scholar says, "Atlantic and Indian Oceans continue to widen while Pacific gets smaller. In 100 million years North America and Asia will probably drift into each other". Paul Hoffman had already named the new super-continent as Amasia.

Jeffrey Welssel at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory says, "The result of this crucial stage in the collision between India and Asia is the breakup of the Indo Australian Plate into separate Indian and

Australian plates". He also said " In The Central Indian Ocean Nature is conducting a large scale experiment for us, showing us what happens to oceanic lithosphere (earth's outer layer) when a force is applied." This experiment had its repercussions, when on fault lines earthquakes hit almost exactly where Indo Australian plates have broken.

Group of researchers from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center have provided with schematic global tectonic activity map, which shows several types of faults, active spreading centers, and volcanoes. The fault-lines or geo fractures are areas where we must watch and take all precautions in constructions to save lives.

This may be a global watch, but Pondicherrian's have specific areas to observe. A Report on Ground Water Survey and Exploration in the Union Territory of Pondicherry and its environs by a team of experts from Central Ground Water Board, Southern region in March 1973 says that "The photo-geological study has also confirmed the existence of the fault to the west of the coastline a straight scarp running almost parallel to Pondicherry- Markanam Road" That finding was made three decades ago.

Dr.S.M.Ramasamy Director of Center for Remote Sensing of Bharathidasan University as early as 1993 said, "The East North East-West South West trending faults on the contrary are showing left handed (sinistrel) ongoing translational movements. Such sinisterly and dextrally moving faults display definite morph tectonic anomalies in the

remotely sensed data and also in the field. In addition, there is a conspicuous land subsidence between Pondicherry in the North East and Cumbum valley in the South West.

One such graben has been established along north east- southwest trending faults in between Pondicherry-Cuddalore in the northeast and Cumbum valley in the Southwest. It is significant to observe that the earthquake epicenters fall along such NE-SW trending fault in Cuddalore, Ariyalor, Dindigul and Kodaikanal.

In view of a geo-fracture i.e. fault line from Kalapet in Pondicherry to Cumbum Valley in South Tamil Nadu, great caution must be taken in construction of high rise structures wherever fault lines have been identified. Earthquake resistant construction design in places where one fault line passes, as mentioned above, is need of the hour. There are pictures taken by satellites using remote sensing techniques had identified studies covering Tamil Nadu its and various fault lines. It is high time sky scrappers do not come up in the fault line and quake prone areas.

While Earthquake precautions are need of the hour, the new threat to Tamil Nadu's coast comes by way of Tsunamis. Tsunami is a known phenomenon in Pacific Ocean stretching from Chile in Latin America to Japan in Far East Asia. Seismic disturbances, coastal earthquakes, volcanic eruptions or under sea landslides that jolt the ocean floor cause tsunamis, which travels at speeds up to

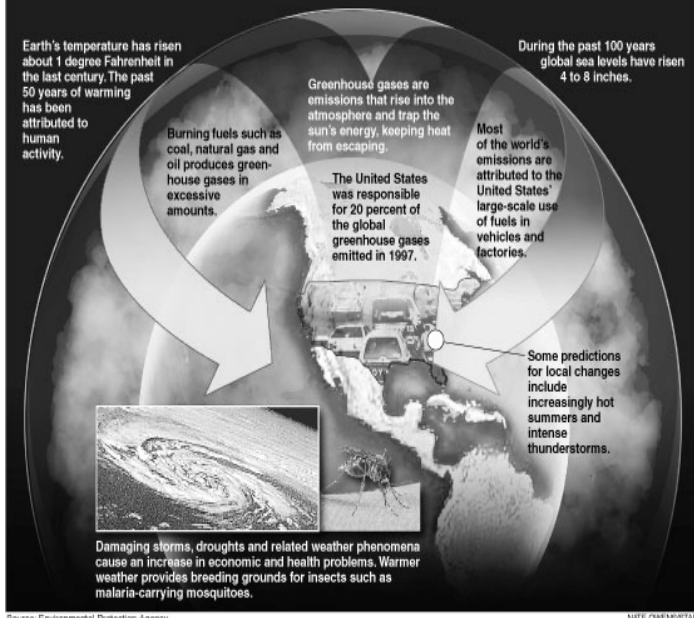
500 miles per hour and reaches heights between 50 and 100 feet.

Tsunami observatories and Earth Quake observatories must be set up for early warning systems. People living in low-lying coastal areas have faced the brunt. "It is high time fishermen settlements are shifted to higher grounds. World Bank and global assistance that is forthcoming must be utilized to create fishermen colonies in high ground "opines Narambai Kanagasabai, President of Narambai Fishermen Panchayat of Pondicherry state.

The green house effect causes rise in sea water levels. Scientists have predicted that by 2100 A.D the rise in sea level will be between 0.5 to 1.5 meters. Before 1.5 million years Sea was closer to Madurai and before 90,000 years Chennai, Pondicherry and Vedaranyam were surrounded by sea. Due to fall in sea levels 65,000 years ago India and Ceylon joined and when sea level rose around 27,000 years ago they parted. Then 17,000 years ago due to fall in water level both joined and when water rose they parted. This is the study-report of Bharathidasan University's Earth Sciences Department.

All these studies and past history makes it clear that our coastline had undergone changes over centuries. Poompuhar of Chola Empire is beneath the seas. Sirkazhi once a coastal town is now an interior town. So changes in our coast are continuous. Caution must be taken about all dwellings in our coast, and let this tsunami attack be an eye opener.

Global warming: Causes and effects



Courtesy: New Indian Express: 1st January 2005

THE DANCE OF GODESS KALI

Nandhivarman

When nations emerged out of societies of strife, the concept of Motherland and Fatherland emerged, denoting the two trends of social living. In matriarchal societies, women warriors were common. They fought forces of evil. These warriors were later personified as goddesses. We can see such goddesses in almost all primitive societies.

In India the goddess Kali has a nationwide appeal. In Tamil villages we have Kali temples everywhere. Mari Amman temples and Kali temples are most common places of worship in our society. Maari in Tamil means rain, thus the worship of rain Goddess was common in water starved Tamil Nadu. Goddess Kali is also known as Kotravai in Tamil, a fierce protector of the good versus evil. Tamil culture, which inclines towards musical or dance forms in every walk of life, sees Kali Attam as one of the interesting forms of practice. Kali worship was beautifully spelt by Swami Vivekananda in a poem titled Kali The Mother

A thousand, thousand shades
Of Death begrimed and black
Scattering plagues and sorrows,
Dancing mad with joy, Come, Mother, Come!
For terror is thy name
Death is in thy breath
And every shaking step
Destroys a world forever
Thou "Time" the All-Destroyer

Come O Mother Come

The dance of Kali is a dance of destruction against forces of evil. And in portrayal of such dances masks are used. The mask culture, dating back to the pre-historic rock paintings of 3000 BC, has traveled down the ages. Terracotta masks (2500 BC) were found in the Mohen-ja-daro excavations. Bhutan has fearful masks of animal spirits. There is a strong belief in masks belonging to souls of ancestors amongst rural population. Mask dancers who propitiate the spirit, in a state of trance give manifold blessings to the gathered devotees.

Masks of Siva and Durga are powerful iconic masks in India. In modern India, mask dances at theatrical and ritualistic levels are thriving well. Many stage artistes and performers have been practicing these dances and they specialize in the forms that are of interest to them.

Gnanaraj hails from a traditional family of artistes who have been performing for eight successive generations. Gnanaraj has skills to perform Karagam, Kavadi, Silambu firepot – dance and tiger-dance. This back-ground helps him in performing Kaaliattam, in which he excels.

Gnanaraj alias Kuppusamy has many performance to his credit. Of particular mention is his participation in the 150-year celebrations of the arrival of Indians as indentured labourers to Gayana, which was celebrated in May 1989. “The performance of this troupe of 17 artists from Pondicherry was

of high caliber and it was much appreciated by the Guyanese audiences including President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, “says a communication from High Commission of India.

Tamil artistes have won recognition from all over the world. An example is LR Krishnamithra who stands on a clay pot or glass tumbler and rotates it while dancing. These rare performances and talented artists bring fame to Pondicherry. South Zone Cultural Center of Tanjavoor and Arts and Culture Department of Pondicherry have commonality to the Tamil audience by inviting artistes from other states and introducing artistes like Gnanaraj to other states.

Courtesy: New Indian Express: 25th June 2005

A SLICE OF PARIS IN PONDICHERRY

N.Nandhivarman

People of Indian origin who have become French nationals by option- it will be interesting to know about these people. When the French bid adieu to their former colony, Pondicherry, they were keen to protect the interests of their citizens. Hence they incorporated Article 8 in the Treaty of Cession of the French Establishments of Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yenam signed on May 28, 1956.

Within six months of signing of this treaty one could choose Indian nationality. If so, they forfeited their French nationality. If the parents had accepted Indian nationality and son wants to revoke French nationality, he can opt for it. Husband and wife have freedom of choice individually in nationality matters. This article in the treaty had created a special category called French nationals of Indian origin. There is no difference in their day-to-day lives and cultural preferences but the nationalities tear them apart. Pondicherry has thus become a haven of French nationals in spite of having Indian citizens all around.

In Paris, the capital of France, there is a House for Tamils known as Paris Tamizhar Illam. ALL Tamils who live in France cannot forget their past overnight, so they celebrate Mahakavi Bharathiar's anniversaries on alien

soil, Pongal, the festival of harvest, is celebrated every year.

Keeping the cultural aspirations intact, Paris Tamizar Illam has set up a branch in Pondicherry. M.Karunanithi and his wife Rajam Karunanithi always play host to dignitaries from India while in France. In the few months they spend every year in Pondicherry this couple try to-do their best to mitigate the sufferings of their fellow kinsmen of Indian nationality.

Speaking about their aims in France, this couple says, “we intend to raise a public auditorium in France for promoting Tamil Arts and Tamil Language and thereby serve the cause of developing Tamil society. “

”Every art needs encouragement and cultural preservation. Therefore it is but natural for Paris Tamils to aspire to set up an auditorium for these purposes.

They also list out what Paris Tamilzhar Illam, the society headed by M. Karunanithi, has achieved all these years. In 1979 the Tamil Audio Visual society was started.

For the first time in 1979 at Nander (France) Thiruvalluvar Tamil School, the first of its kind was started. After the French government gave permission to the French Brevet Examinations to study Tamil as an optional subject students could benefit out of such an exercise. The Paris Tamilzahar Illam has trained and sent 375 students for these exams.

Apart from these achievements, the conduct of functions and festivals to unite Paris Tamils had been a regular exercise for the Paris Tamizhar Illam.

The founder of Paris Tamilzhar Illam is a Periyarite, devout disciple of Periyar E.V.Ramaswamy, yet he celebrated the Mahakavi Bharathar Centenary with fanfare in 1981.

The then Chief Minister of Pondicherry, D.Ramachandiran, Education Minister Renuka Appadurai and PWD Minister Perumal Rasa had graced the functions by their presence. Not forgetting his mentor, M Karunanithi celebrated Periyar E.V.Ramasamy's anniversary too.



. Dravida Kazhagam General Secretary K Veeramani was the Chief Guest. Also K Kuppusamy, P Devasagayam and photographer Suba Sundaram accompanied K Veeramani on the tour to Paris.

While continuing with their hospitality, receiving every Tamil leader and artists in France, in Pondicherry too they have set up a branch of Paris Tamizhar Illam. This branch runs a Periyar EVR centre for Training Destitute women and has so far trained 38 women for government examinations.

Courtesy: New Indian Express: October 2 of 2004

MAN OF LETTERS: Great litterateur Gnanou Diagou

Nandhivarman

Great men and great deeds may get lost in the sands of history. But a grateful society leaves monuments for successive generations to remember them with gratitude.

Behind every monument there is history. A statue at the Pondicherry Government hospital reminds us of the donor who gifted the land for its construction. The clock tower of Grand Bazaar also rekindles memories of its donor, the grandfather of an illustrious son of the soil, Le Bottennier Gnanou Diagou.

The 127th birth anniversary of Le Battonnier Gnanou Diagou, a man of letters and philanthropist falls on August 15. Not just the monuments but Gnanou Diagou's contribution to Tamil literature has been forgotten by the literary world and local population. His French translations of Kamba Ramayanam, Araneri saaram, Assara kovai, Nanmani kadigai, Naladiar and the Thirukkural are everlasting contributions that must be lauded by a grateful society.

Sir C.P.Ramasamy [Iyer] in the forward written to the French translation of Thirukkural lauds rom thus: “ Mr.Gnanou Diagou's rendering of Thiruvalluvar's Kural into French is important and significant to international cultural collaboration.”

Gnanou Diagou born on August 15, 1877, was an eminent lawyer and served as President of Bar Association. For nearly three decades he taught students of The Ecole de Droit Pondicherry as Professor of Law and wrote several books on Hindu and Mohammedan law. He was also a popular political leader of Pondicherry from 1908 to 1925. He founded the Historical Society and left his imprint as its Vice President from 1911 till his son Cojande Dairianathan succeeded him in 1948.

The conferment of honour initiated by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802 has the following titles of honour similar to our Padma Bushan, Padma Vibushan and Padma Sri. Grand Officier da la Legion d'honneur is the first in rank. The second one is Chevalier de la legion d'honneur. This was conferred on meritorious people for social service and the French Government in recognition of his services had honoured him by conferring the second medal of honour, The Legion of Honour on January 15th 1920. He also won awards like Officier d'Academie and Chevalier du merite agricole. As member of the Conseil General. The French version of the Legislative Assembly with limited powers, he served the public.

Gnanou Diagou was the descendent of one of the oldest and distinguished "Dubash" families of Pondicherry. Lazario de Motha Tanappa Modeliar, the illustrious ancestor of Gnanou Diagou had collaborated with Francois Martin in 1673 in the very foundation of the French settlement in Pondicherry. His successors Moutiappa Modeliar and his son Pedro Canagaraya Modeliar were no less distinguished. Pedro

Canakaraya Modeliar was the recipient of the gold medal from Louis XV, King of France for his good offices in securing Karaikal from the Maharaja of Tanjore in 1739. There is a street named after him that in current days is called Canteen Street, though in name it exists in street boards. His son Diagou Modeliar, the grandfather of Gnanou Diagou erected the clock tower in the Grand Bazaar apart from many choultries to feed the poor. The street parallel to Nehru Street is named after Diagou Modeliar.

Hailing from such an illustrious family, Gnanou Diagou scaled greater heights in public esteem through his literary works.

He wanted to preserve the history of Pondicherry and was instrumental in having the manuscript of Ananda Ranga Pillai's diaries copied from the original for publication purposes. He analyzed the decisions of Superior Council from 1735 to 1820, the work of almost a century and published them in eight volumes. He has written an authoritative book on General de Lally, the unlucky successor of Dupliex in whose period the entire white town including the Palace of Dupliex was destroyed.

History is not a mere record of the events of the past. It has a meaning to be learnt. The acts of philanthropy are lauded to inculcate in the present such noble qualities. The inter cultural exchange by taking the essence of Tamil classical literature to French as done by Gnanou Diagou is an incomplete mission for every generation of writers...Courtesy :New Indian Express:

CALENDARS GALORE

[Nandhivarman though is in the field which is the last resort of the scoundrel, in spite of being a politician he continues to write in Tamil and English. His articles started to appear in Tamil from 1962. In English from 1966 he left his imprint .He served as Associate Editor of New Times Observer during 1994-1995.He regularly writes a column in The New Indian Express, Week End pages for the Pondicherry, Cuddalore, Vellore, Chingelpet region. The collections of articles here have appeared in The New Indian Express.]

Happy New Year2005 has begun with tears in every eye. Greetings were not exchanged by the grief stricken Asians. Prayers and mourning marked the mute celebrations. But if Chithirai 1st day comes in middle of April, Tamils will again celebrate Tamil New Year's Day. Among the Tamils there are scholars who prefer January 15th as beginning of Thiruvalluvar Aaandu 2036. Telugus celebrate Ugadhi, their New Year. So it becomes evident that various calendars and New Years exist for various cultures.

There were two Mayan Calendars. One had 260 days and was a sacred calendar used for worship. The other one consisted of 365 days and was a seasonal calendar used for farming and normal daily life. The year was made up of 18 months of 20 days each with five additional days to bring the total to 365. This calendar defines a year of 18 months, each of 20 days, and five extra days, 365 days in total.

These extra days were considered unlucky and so very little was done on them. Each year had a name and number combination as did the days in the Tzolkin (Mayan sacred calendar) but this time there were only 52 such combinations before repeating. This series was known as a 'bundle' or a 'Calendar Round'.

The two calendars of 260 days and 365 days run simultaneously and after a period of 52 years they will once more start on the same day. This is one of many cycles, which the Mayans kept track of. They were great astronomers and recorded the sunspot cycle and various planetary cycles. The longest cycle they discovered was the orbit of our solar system around Pleiades, a cycle of 26,000 years.

Most of the recorded dates, which have been found, begin with '9', which means between (9×144000) days and (10×144000) days since the start of the long count, which would equate to 436 AD to 829 AD. It is thought that when the long count reaches 13.0.0.0.0 it is reset to 0.0.0.0.0 thus giving a period of 5125.37 years. This brings us to 22 Dec 2012 AD when either time ends or we start a new Maya Era. By combining the long count and the Tzolkiun and Haab dates it is possible to quote a date, which will be unique for a period of 374,152 years, or 73 Maya Eras. So perhaps we will be safe after 2012 AD after all.

An information leaflet from the Royal Greenwich Observatory details the history of the calendar as a method for keeping track of the passage of time. L. E. Doggett speaks

about the history of various calendars, including the Gregorian, Julian, Hebrew, Islamic, Indian, Chinese and explains the astronomical bases of calendars, calendar reform movements, and historical eras and chronologies. Chinese calendar states 1996 as the Year of the Rat and 1997 as the Year of the Ox. Christian calendars calculate when Easter and its attendant Christian holidays (Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and others) will fall in a particular year and also when other feast days in the Roman Catholic tradition will occur. Various algorithms used to calculate Easter's date, discuss when certain cultures adopted the Western method for determining the Easter date, and even posits that current formulas for determining the Easter date might not be valid in the far future.

Another 13-month calendar propositions are 13 months of four weeks and 28 days. In this way, January 1 falls on the same weekday, year after year, unlike the current calendar, in which January 1 falls on a different day from one year to the next.

In "The Triple Triumph of the Moon," Isaac Asimov's second triumph spoke about how Neolithic man might have come up with calendars and how this necessitated the gradual increase in mathematical and intellectual ability. Having grasped the concept of the lunar month, it is easy to see that twelve months roughly correspond to one cycle of seasonal changes. This is a lot easier than counting 365 days. Such knowledge is important in calculating the time one has till winter or a dry/rainy season. Such knowledge is essential to the development of agriculture.

Realizing that this system of time keeping becomes less accurate over time, more complicated methods are developed e.g. leap-months. A connection between the study of such celestial patterns and the fortunes of mankind is established. Hence, the rise of New Moon and Harvest Moon religious festivals followed in time by the flowering of astronomy and astrology.

Courtesy: The New Indian Express-weekend-8.01.2005

LANGUAGE LABOUR

Pondicherry University, a Central University established the Department of Tamil in 1986, and later upgraded to a School of Tamil. Yes, thus came the Subramania Bharathi School of Tamil Language and Literature. “This school had produced 60 scholars who have done their PhD’s and 28 are currently striving to become Doctors of Literature. 181 scholars obtained M.Phil degrees and currently 34 are studying. The research culminates in presentation of scholarly thesis” states Dean of the School Dr. A.Arivunambi. Dr.Arivunambi also functions as Acting Vice Chancellor during the absence of the regular Vice Chancellor. As the leading beacon of Tamil Development he states with pride that Pondicherry University is the first and only one to have got grants for 5 years under Special Assistance Scheme from the University Grants Commission. This recent achievement gives impetus to draw plans for the development of Classical Tamil.

“If you want to know about the Tamil computing researchers, www.tamilsoftware.biz lists out only 2 people from the Union territory of Pondicherry. They are Professor Kuppusamy, who heads the Computer Sciences Department of Pondicherry University and Prasanna Venkatesan, Lecturer of same faculty. At one faculty two researchers exist to give impetus for promoting Tamil in the world of web, and the other side we have a Tamil Department which had yet to avail this talent within the campus to equip Tamil scholars and students

with adequate knowledge to handle computers and to elevate Tamil to the reach of netizens.” opined a Tamil scholar with anguish. There seems to be fresh plans for inter departmental coordination after such criticisms were aired in scholarly circles.

The western experiments to open knowledge to one and all by creating Open Access Online Libraries, from where all scholarly research papers could be availed by anyone interested from any part of the globe is slowly spreading its influence over Tamil scholars. Tamil lovers of Pondicherry are keen to know the subjects of the research undertaken by various scholars in the Pondicherry University. “The practice to upload all research materials into Internet is a must and web publishing must be given top priority so that what a researcher in Pondicherry University does becomes known to other researchers all over the world,” said C.P.Thirunavukkarasu, President of Anna Foundation. Though members of the faculty have brought out many books and students too have many books and articles to their credit, in these days of globalization, they have to market their achievements, publicize them and bring it to public notice.

A report of the expert committee headed by Va.Suba.Maniccam Former Vice Chancellor of Madurai Kamaraj University had in the initial years suggested for creation of separate faculties for Tamil Studies, Linguistic Studies, Fine Arts and Overseas studies. It had mooted the suggestion that under the faculty of Tamil Studies departments of Tamil Literature, Cultural studies, Religious and Mythological Studies, Comparative literature and Indian

folklore could be set up. The committee also had suggested separate department for Bharathiar and Bharathidasan Studies.

The Faculty of Linguistic Studies with separate departments of Indian Grammatical Studies, Linguistics, Translation, Dialectology and Tribal languages and The Faculty of Fine Arts with Department of Music, dance, Drama and Painting must have been set up, if the recommendations of the expert committee had been taken into consideration. Much time is lost and because these faculties and departments were not created in spite of the First Central university being started in a Tamil language speaking region.

Dr.R.Kothandaraman of Tholkaapiyar Centre for Fundamental Research says that “sixteen years had passed and lots of opportunities are lost. There is a need to review the expert committee’s suggestions and to have an update on its recommendations so that fresh initiatives to develop Tamil studies could be explored”. Incidentally he was one of the members of that Expert committee. Due to non allocation of funds where our representatives failed, all such new departments could not come up till 2007, the time when next five year plan launches. As a prelude for opening Departments of Modern Literature and Religious Literature, two new M.Phil courses have started, thanks to the initiatives of Dr.Ilamathi Janakiraman.

This unique Central University must be made into a global meeting place for promoting Tamil as an international language with state-of-the-art technology to connect to the global

Tamil community via the Information Highway feel the foreign scholars doing research in Tamil.

“To help Tamil communities living abroad to establish a digital network for promoting the study of Tamil language and literature, to establish a grid of learning so that Tamil communities worldwide may exchange Web-based resources, to develop and promote Tamil in electronic form to enable Tamil learners to experience the glory of Tamil language and culture, to promote a sense of Tamil identity both in nations having large Tamil populations and all former French colonies with which still sizeable Pondicherrians are culturally and professionally interlinked, Pondicherry University had lot to do” opines Mannar Mannan, President of Puthuvai Tamil Sangam.

“These former French colonies have large population of Tamils who are on the verge of forgetting their mother tongues. Hence online courses to impart Tamil learning to geographically separate Tamil communities becomes the historical mission of Pondicherry University and it is time it reaches out to those who need its help” said Professor M.Lenin Thangappa.

But all scholars are hoping that Subramania Bharathiar School of Tamil studies will surge ahead and scale great heights in glory, since the very name of the school will be a source of inspiration for all knowledgeable Tamils to pool their goodwill to make this School known internationally. Courtesy: New Indian Express-weekend: 7.05 2005

THE WALES CONNECTION

Pondicherry is a place, which attracts peoples of various cultures and from Pondicherry a bright student, went to Wales for higher studies in law. He came back deeply impressed by the Welsh culture. Everyone thinks that English is spoken all over England, yet there remains Wales, where people are proud of their regional culture. Cardiff is the capitol of Wales since 1955 and a place of government from 1999 with the opening of the devolved Welsh assembly government.

It has a population of 3, 25,000. And out of this 5% speak Welsh one of the oldest languages in Europe. Cardiff University where the Pondicherrian Michael.M.Antony went to study his LL.M has given due place to welsh tongue too, thus bilingual publications are common sight there. And Cardiff University is a place that promotes research. Among the 106 universities and colleges of United Kingdom, Cardiff was placed 7 th by a study.

To protect its regional culture the Museum of Welsh life was opened on 7 th July 1948. It is one of the Europe's foremost open-air museums. The last 500-year history of Wales is depicted in all its facets at the St.Fagans Castle, a 16 th century fort. The statues of wax will make us believe that we are in the presence of the Late Personalities, as could be seen in pictures where Antony will be with Queen Elizabeth, Princess Diana and Mahatma Gandhi.

“This museum teaches us on how our Arikamedu museum in Pondicherry should be constructed to be a living demonstration of the bygone centuries.

As you all know people who have read about Arikamedu and its archaeological excavations of a hoary past go disillusioned after their visit to that site, since a damaged building and some shrubs and bushes alone remain to be seen. The model of National museum of Wales if emulated and an open air museum is set up it will promote our tourism,” opines M.M.Antony.

The present government has acquired land to set up a site museum. The dynamic Minister for Tourism of Government of Pondicherry K.Lakshminarayanan is determined to make Arikamedu Museum a memorable experience for tourists who throng to Pondicherry. And in this hour comes this suggestion from a student of Pondicherry.

M.M.Antony during his studies at Cardiff University brought out a beautiful book titled “Environmental Liability: The stretch of company director’s accountability in the United Kingdom”. He became interested in the subject inspired by the words of a British Minister. “It is not acceptable for a company to make highly priced goods for highly paid consumers in the developed world by ruining the health of the children in the sweatshops of the developing world. It is not acceptable for a company to make beautiful furniture for the homes of rich families in the west but leave a devastated forest landscape in Brazil” said then Minister for Corporate Social

Responsibility and Member of Parliament
Douglas Alexander.

Since India is facing lot of environmental problems M.M.Antony applied his mind on researching in environmental law. His forays into the subject made him analyze the impact of European Community's environmental laws and that of the USA and UK.

With such rich experience gained at Cardiff University, he could have opted for a good job overseas, yet he chose to be in India. As only son born after 16 years of wed lock he is even now mummy's child deeply attached to his mother Mercy and a possessive father K.M.S.Devadasan eager to groom his son in his mould as a fire brand journalist editing the only bi lingual weekly of Pondicherry appearing since 1966.

Courtesy: The New Indian Express-week end
29.01.2005

LESSONS FROM LONDON

The British people who once claimed that sun never sets in their kingdom have seen that their glory never faces dusk. The way followed by those who ruled India once must awaken our spirits to preserve our past as they do. London founded by Romans in 43 A.D had been the home of monarchs and governments since 1066. Of many places of tourist interest in London the Westminster Abbey is where for nearly 900 years every King or Queen of England had been crowned and many monarchs are buried there.

Britain for centuries was a sea power and in Greenwich, which is 8 kilometers downstream from London Bridge, there is a National Maritime Museum wherein history and relics of the 500-year maritime history is kept preserved. Indians were early sea- farers and centuries before others they navigated around the globe. Yet in India we never preserve our maritime records and history. In fact at 12 major ports at least our country must have maritime museums. Greenwich is famous for being the time-keeper of the globe. The prime meridian of zero longitude, the imaginary line which links the north and south poles was fixed at Greenwich in 1844 and is marked by a plate on the path. A visitor can claim to be straddling the two halves of the globe by placing a foot on either side of the line. We know laksman reka but we are not aware of Greenwich reka.

The White Tower of London built by William the Conqueror (1066-1087) has served as

royal palace, fortress, prison and place of execution. It also houses the world famous British crown jewels. The Imperial State Crown made for the coronation of George VI in 1937 was altered for Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. It is set with 2868 diamonds, 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds, 5 rubies and 273 pearls. The famous Koh-i-noor diamond from India adorns the British crown.

The tower bridge is a miracle of hydraulic engineering. Sir Horace Jones designed it along with Sir John Wolfe Barry. The 1000 tonne drawbridges are raised to allow tall ships to pass between its twin gothic style towers. The construction started in 1886 and completed in 1894 at a cost of 800,000 pounds. The towers are connected by a 142 feet walkway. Such landmarks are necessary to make any Indian town or city as exciting as London. The River Thames of London stands in contrast with River Coovum of Chennai as extreme poles, the former with its scenic beauty and latter with its stinking nasty.

The name London itself was derived from a Celtic word Llyn-din which means river place. In India we call rivers holy yet we fail to keep them clean. Civilizations grew in riverbanks all over the world. We have our Indus valley civilization with sanitation and planned cities 2000 years ago. Yet now if we look at our cities and its garbage mountains, we have to think to stem the rot before it is too late. The lessons from a London walk are many.

The 18 th century Prime Minister William Pitt described the capitals parks as lungs of London. Saint James Park, Green Park, Hyde

Park, Regents Park, Battersea Park, Greenwich Park are some of the lungs that purify the air of London but also remain everlasting attraction to tourists. With much fanfare about tourism promotion except in Delhi and Bangalore we cannot boast of Parks and Chennai remains pathetic in this regard. The amusement parks at east coast road may have tried to attract tourists, but what about corporation parks and spaces left for parks for various colonies, one must ponder over. The exciting London visit must educate our planners to make our cities as excitable; otherwise we will not become one among the developed world.

Courtesy: The New Indian Express weekend
5.02.2005

POPE AND PEOPLES HOPE

The new Pope blesses the people. All eyes are on his blessing hand. The people see a golden ring, which carries the picture of fishermen spreading his net to catch. This is one of the two symbols of papacy. To the tsunami struck fishermen, this symbol reminds that all Popes care for fishermen. But it draws a biblical reference too.

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gen-nes-'a-ret, he saw two boats and fishermen washing their nets because they did not get good catches on that day. Jesus gets into the boat and tells to Simon "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch". He obeys and nets good catch may be by divine blessing. But this biblical story also stresses the scientific invention of good catches in deep waters. Simon, the fishermen became the first disciple of Jesus assuming the name Saint Peter. In remembrance of that it is customary to give a fishermen ring to the new Pope.

A pallium made out of white wool would also be presented to the newly chosen. That symbolizes the shepherd's treading the footsteps of Jesus, who is also known as Good Shepherd. When Joseph Ratzinger, a 78-year-old German is chosen to lead the 1.1 billion-member Church these two gifts symbolizes the early composition of the followers of Christianity. The new Pope is aware of the challenges in the developing world to declining religious faith in the West. "So many currents, ideologies and different ways of thinking" had

shaken the faith of many Christians and the Catholic Church faced an uncertain future threatened by the rise of Christian sects around the world, Ratzinger said in a homily.

"Having a clear faith according to the creed of the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism," he said, adding that the Church had to reject "a dictatorship of relativism" that denied the existence of absolute truths. "An adult faith is not one that follows tides of trends and the latest novelties. To be adult and mature the faith must be deeply rooted in friendship with Christ," he said. If we go back to the pages of the past, the first person to study the conditions of the origins of Christianity was Frederick Engels. He pointed out that the "most important condition was the formation of the Roman Empire.

The creation of a world monarchy paved the way for a leveling cult. The Roman conquest brought with it the defeat of the individual states. Its despotic and violent regime, oppression of the provinces, high taxes and general absence of civil rights led to apathy and demoralization among the broad masses, not only the slaves, but also the free population". It was the background that remained conducive for the inception of a global religion. Old religions were tribal and national, hence could not go beyond limited boundaries. To fulfill this vacuum, the rulers of Roman Empire made some attempts to create a world religion. Roman government attempted to create the cult of the emperor's genius, cult of the guardian of the city of

Rome namely goddess Roma, and the cult of Jupiter Capitolius. All these failed.

A religion of the slaves and oppressed based on the arrival of a redeemer from their sufferings emerged as many sects. In the Koran the followers of Jesus Christ are constantly referred to as Nazarenes. That was probably the original name given to the sect of Jesus' followers. Most often his followers called themselves simply believers, brethren etc, in the beginning only their opponents referred to them as Christians. Now that global religion faces challenges, which the new Pope underlines as splitting into many sects, as in the beginning.

The father of Christianity, a Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria believed that there was a holy mediator between the God and the material world, the Divine Logos (Word). This was common idea in Greek idealist philosophy. The divine Logos, Son of God, became the central figure in Christianity namely Jesus Christ, says Fredrick Engels. In Hindu religion, the word "OM" resembles the divine logos and the son of Shiva called Muruga, fits into the Greek concept. These similarities strengthen the truth that all religions have universal concepts and beliefs.

But Pope must be perturbed over the religious intolerance that has brought terrorism to the forefront. The twin towers of America brought down by fundamentalists is the warning signal that cannot be ignored anymore. Clash of religions, cultures ignited by Osama Bin Ladens and men of his ilk, is unnecessary, unwarranted and rests on imaginary and false

foundations. All religions emerged to unite people, to offer solace to the oppressed and to bring love and Peace on earth. Standing at the cross roads of history, the new Pope outlines his duties in the first words spoken, which admits the challenges ahead. In Pope, people hope, movements to global peace and equanimity eschewing enmity among fellow human beings will find support and leadership.

Courtesy: The New Indian Express: 2005

Hygienic Fish Markets: Fashion of the Day

The wind of globalization is introducing new concepts like air-conditioned vegetable and fish markets by private parties providing jobs to entrepreneurial youth. At the same time we have Pondicherry's over crowded

Main market, a place you have to plough your way in a stream of sweat and foul smell. Ever increasing garbage accumulation poses problems for municipal sanitary workers who toil tirelessly to keep market surroundings clean. The Lorries that bring the daily requirements for market and small vehicles that bring fish struggle to catch space with consumers who in a haste to park as they please in the entrances of the market.

This is a scene of chaos with increase in population. In Pondicherry region we have fish markets in Pondicherry, Muthialpet, Ariyankuppam, Nellithoppu, Madukarai and Villianur and temporary markets have sprung up in roadsides at many sub urban places. Nowadays people are looking for hygiene in every aspect of life and consumer awareness is at its peak. Further the perishable products must be sold in haste thereby fish vendors loose their revenue. The setting up of cost price shops by private parties and cooperative institutions too jumping into that bandwagon not to be left behind is a telling tale of our times. Vegetable stalls that offer fresh vegetables in air-conditioned surroundings have cropped up. Chickens and Mutton are sold in shops

making it easy for people to buy at various places.

But in spite of all this the fish market, vegetable market, flower market and small shops that sell from provisions to brooms are within a limited space of the main market restricted by various constraints making it impossible to expand.

In such scenario a new Air Conditioned Fish for You shop set by an enterprising young educated youth K.Ponnambalam of Vanarapet, that has come up at the beginning of the Mahatma Gandhi Road near Railway station is refreshing experiment breaking from past.

A student from nearby Veerampattinam fisher-men village of Pondicherry, P.Saravanane who is the 4th son of a traditional fisherman, doing his second year in doctorate in fish pathology at the Sterling University of Scotland U.K having completed his M.FSc. (Master of Fisheries Science) at Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute Cochin on his visit to his home felt that fish markets here must be improved to make it places of hygiene in order to attract better prices for fish apart from consumer convenience and comfort of buying in a cleaner environment.

To wash sands and filth in the fish catches that comes to market, P.Saravanane suggests setting up of a one-ton capacity of filtering steel tank at the entrance of the market. Immediately after washing fresh icing must be done for the preservation. The fish market should be completely closed and centrally air

conditioned for maintaining low temperature, which can reduce the quick spoilage of fish. Hygienic and decent dressing for the fish vendors encouraged. Separate cabins with a washable fish-displaying table should be constructed for selling the fish and be provided with a clear drainage channel, which eventually leads to a common drainage canal. Display table must have fiberglass doors so that fishes can be displayed on an ice layer in the glass cabinet. Each cabin must be given separate pipe connections for easy and quick washing of cabin before and after selling. A hygienic and eco-friendly bag for packing the fish is introduced. There should be a high capacity and quality flake ice machine inside the market for preserving the fish and also for the display unit. Definite control measures should be taken for fly and other insects. It's also wise to have a cold storage room with two different temperatures like 4°C and -20°C with clear racks and boxes for short time and long time storage of fish respectively. The market should also be provided with two doors each one for entry and exit. A separate fish cleaning room should be constructed with same facility like fish selling area with a washable table with the provision of tap water pipe connection for each fish dresser. Use of clean stainless steel knife and other fish cutting instruments is encouraged. There should be an exit in the fish dressing room so that the customers can directly exit the market, says P.Saravanane who wants to see his hometown and its markets improve to reach the western standards at least stage by stage.

Fish lovers are braving all ordeals in fish markets to buy their choice and scared

housewives wait for street vendors to bring fish to their doors. Let us make their life not only less miserable but make it pleasant to both sellers and buyers. Let Fish woman who carry head-loads of fish and are frowned upon regain their self respect and dignity in pursuing their marketing with changing needs of our times. Fish is wealth and not filth that comes to markets. Let planners plan ultra modern fish markets, while private stalls come up every where to cater the needs of growing population conscious of cleaner environment.

Courtesy: The New Indian Express
28.08.2004

POONGODI PARANGUSAM

N.Nandhivarman

Poet's daughter being a Poet is rare, usually such tradition lacks continuity. But the daughter of Late Poet and Parliamentarian Puthuvai Sivam has established her credentials as a Tamil Poet who had won the prestigious kalaimaamani award for the year 2004-2005 for language and literature. Poongodi Parangusam is an educationist who gave up her career to devote more time to her family. But the passion for writing did not dry in her. In most of the cultural meetings one could notice her either delivering speeches or rendering poems.

Poongodi a postgraduate teacher worked in various schools from 1964 to 1996 the last being Government High School Reddiarpalayam. She had other roles to perform at home as mother of three children and wife of an industrialist Parangusam. Her father S.Sivapragasam, known as Puthuvai Sivam was Rajya sabha member in seventies. At that time she wedded Parangusam and her marriage was performed by then Tamil Nadu Education Minister Navalar Nedunchezian. It is no surprise because her father an ardent disciple of Pavendhar Bharathidasan was following the tradition of self-respect marriages. But when it came to the marriages of her children she kept up that tradition in midst of changing times. Her daughter Tamizharasi a dentist married Senthil Kumar a dentist. Her second daughter Ezhilarasi an architect married Sridharan another architect.

“The fore thought to give green signal to these love marriages among persons of same profession shows Poongodi as a modern mother. The most surprising part is her second daughter Ezhilarasi’s marriage in a Namboodri family of Kerala, yet she conducted the marriages as self respect marriages only,” says Durai Malirayan a poet of many epics.

Having accomplished her family tasks she took voluntary retirement and then she faced many legal battles with the land mafia and undeterred she fights against heavy odds. All these experiences brought out a poet activating her inner voice. She started writing poetry particularly the traditional poetry with meter. “ There are many who write modern verses. But to write poetry following the rules of Tamil grammar is a daunting task. And Poongodi does her poetical work with meticulous care and powerful articulation “opines Professor Ilamathi Janakiraman of Pondicherry University.

As recognition of her works the Department Arts and Culture of Pondicherry government had conferred kalaimaamani award for language and literature. Her recent book Vanna Vilakkugal which means colorful lights is a hit among the Tamil audiences. The themes she had chosen to write poetry is varied and remarkable. She stresses the need for Tamils across the globe uniting to uphold their language and culture. Poongodi records her voice on feminism. Her poems include current governmental schemes like the Tank Rehabilitation project executed with European Commission’s assistance. She had written

poems on Bharathiar, Bharathidasan, Deveneya Paavanar and Late K.Kamaraj. Among the list of personalities glorified in her poems is the Chief Minister Rangasamy whose simplicity and down to earth approach finds special place in her poetic portrayal.

In the preface to her book Santhapaamani Aranga Natarasan says “To me it seems she is the first Feminine Poet who had rendered a book of Poems composed in accordance with Tamil grammatical rules and meter” Poongodi Parangusam had not even left the India shining campaign of last elections untouched. Her poetic criticism on the un-kept promises of politician’s election after election echoes general public opinion.

As she backs her husband in his dual role as agriculturalist and industrialist, her poems stress the importance of farming sector and the need to bring cheers to the tillers and toilers of soil. “The award given to me has made me conscious of my contributions to society and I am writing on the President A.P.J.Abdul Kalam’s dream of seeing India a Super Power by 2020. It will be my humble token of respects to that great visionary” says Poongodi Parangusam with eyes on future.

Courtesy: New Indian Express dated:27th August 2005]

DANCING PEACOCK FROM SWITZERLAND

N.Nandhivarman

Ms.Mangalanayagi Vasanthakumar visited Pondicherry last weekend as a cultural ambassador from Switzerland, the land of her domicile since 1992 after having been uprooted from the war torn Srilanka. She lost her parents in her early teens and went to Switzerland to live with her brother and married a close relative Vasanthakumar. She is running a dance school in Luzern area of Switzerland.

Along with some other dance teachers is keeping the Tamil dance tradition alive in Switzerland.



Rabindranath Tagore lamenting on the decline of Bharathanatyam in India once said “Lord Siva gave his dance to Indonesians and left India only with his ashes”. But like a phoenix out of ashes, this dance regained life in TamilNadu and now as torchbearers of Tamil culture, Indian and Srilankan dancers are nourishing this tradition in whichever country they live.

Anusha (Zug), Mathivathani and Gnanasundari (Zurich), Bhavani (Basel), Chandravathani (Berne), Nimalini (Zug), Anusha (Berne), Fedolina (Winterthur) and Meena (Olter) are the dance teachers teaching dance to girls of Tamil parents and of Inter-country marriages. Every year these teachers are sending their students to participate in the 4-day programme during the Easter holidays, which will be held at Solothurn to select a “Natya Mayil” which means dancing peacock.

Nearly among 700 participants the talented artist will be chosen for the award. Bharathanatyam is the traditional Indian dance form, which is narrated in the 5560 couplets of Bharatha’s Natya Sastra. Slowly this dance instead of being practiced by one and all became confined to temples and devadasis. At that point of time it was known as Sathirattam in Tamil.

During the days of freedom struggle attempts were made to involve women from all strata of society in practice of this dance. Krishna Iyer, an advocate who used to play women’s roles in dramas wrote about Dance and Health. He stressed the need for dancing ones way to sound health. Heeding to his appeal, the

daughter of Ganapathy Iyer one Miss Kalanithi staged her performance in 1938, which was considered revolutionary in those days. Sathirattam became known as Bharathanatyam and almost 7 decades are over with such name change and now everyone practices this dance form. It is a sign of liberation of women. And in keeping this dance tradition alive Mangalanayagi is performing a laudable role in Switzerland.

This year from Pondicherry Kalaimamani K.Rajamanikam and Thirumudi Arun went to Switzerland to provide live music for the dance competition to select the dancing peacock awardees for 2005. Thirumudi Arun is the last son of Late Thirumudi Sethuraman Chettiar former M.P and a great philanthropist. Both artists came home deeply impressed by the work done by Ms.Mangalanayagi. And Mangalanayagi underwent further refresher course in dance under the guidance of Kalaimamani Rajamanikam. Mangalanayagi originally learnt dance in Jaffna from Padmini Selvendrakumar and underwent 5 year training by Sivajini Srikantharajah. In addition she had finished 3-year diploma course in Fine arts under the Jaffna University.

Her current guru Kalaimamani K.Rajamanikam started his dance school Sangeetha Salangai Natyalaya in the year 1992. His disciples so far had staged 27 arangetrams. Kalaimamani Rajamanikam got training under the illustrious Thanjavor KP Kittappa Pillai and from Annamalai University Isaimamani diploma. He had staged the dance dramas titled Puratchi Kavi, Veera Thaa and Oru Karsilambu Niyayam Ketkirathu based on

Silapathigaram epic. Currently he is choreographing the dance drama Arunkalaiselvi Aayi, scripted by Poet Jayarayer, who is known as silver-tongued poet of Pondicherry. This dance drama is about Aayi who laid the foundations for drinking water supply to Pondicherry. So far he had trained around 150 students who got married to grooms from overseas and in Europe he has many disciples of his school.

Sangeetha Salangai Natyalaya of Pondicherry on 17 th July 2005 in a function conferred the title Kalaigannamani on Mangalanayagi. The Speaker of Pondicherry Legislative Assembly M.D.R.Ramachandiran conferred the title and Former Minister K.Lakshminarayanan felicitated the artist. It is recognition for her services in Switzerland, and Pondicherry keeping its cosmopolitan outlook honours talent from whichever part of the globe. While acknowledging the award with humble thanks, Mangalanayagi Director of Salangai Nartanalam said "Switzerland's International Institute of Tamil Arts in Zurich is holding trainings and classes in Dance, Music both vocal and instrumental and accords seven grades in selection of artists. There is specified syllabus for every grade and students have to prove their mettle in theory as well as practical. These courses are taught through Tamil medium of instructions" Thus apart from private initiative collective steps to nourish Tamil Dance and Music contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage. Timely warning by Tagore had awakened Tamils and they are keeping their tradition alive .

Courtesy: New Indian Express: July 23 / 2005]

PRIYAN'S PAINTINGS

N.Nandhivarman

La Giaconda is one of the world's most famous paintings. You may blink at this statement. . But if we say Mona Lisa all will know. The painting may be famous but can anyone tell whose portrait Mona Lisa is? Very few knew that the painting of Mona Lisa is that of Mona Lisa Gherarni, the wife of Francesca del Giaconda of Florence. From this one lesson is derived. A painter can make a personality immortal. The artist can leave a deep imprint in peoples mind and if his craft catches people's imagination it will live beyond his lifetime. That is why society encourages students to get involved in hobbies like painting and among those who aspire Priyan Voltaire had gained recognition.

Priyan hails from a family that had liberated itself from the bonds of casteism and regionalism. Yes the parents of this upcoming painter are lovers fostering Tamil and Kerala union. Ramachandran, a freelance journalist is a Marxian and social activist who evaded wedlock for long. But love was powerful and he had to succumb by marrying Alice, a nurse, who is a Keralite. Born to such parents who are fond of their two sons Priyan Voltaire (15) and Russil Vladimir (13) sky was the limit for the affection and love showered by the parents.

Priyan's father tried his best to groom the son in his mould. You could have seen Priyan Voltaire addressing street corner meetings

against globalization while he was 12 years along with progressive forces. As age grew, maturity dawned. The boy had started to think independently. Priyan Voltaire in the aftermath of the display of his paintings declared that henceforth the theme of his paintings would be messages against terrorism. His father's influence over him is on the wane. He had become a believer. The father and son are engaged in a serious family debate. The son cites the example of Professor Anthony Flew who after being a proponent of atheism for half a century at his 81-st age became a believer. Priyan asks his father what is wrong in being a believer.

Priyan says "researcher's investigation of the DNA had shown that the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements, which are needed to produce life, and this, makes him a believer." The debate in the family though unconnected resembles the debate in America by a group that is called intelligent design. More than 360 biologists in America had signed a joint memorandum challenging evolution and this had set the tone to admire the intelligent design of human race, which became the name of the group. Priyan's father in desperation writes in his usual column in a local weekly "I went to him and asked why we perceive god in human form and is it correct to impose human form advocacy on other species?" This question may sound as being addressed to religious people, but he argues before his son indirectly, and fails to convince him. There is one lesson in this episode. No ideology by Gnostics or agnostics could be imposed on any thinking human being. Days have gone when sons accepted their father's

version as gospel. That does not mean indiscipline in family. It means we are in an age of enlightenment and knowledge explosion where every concept on earth will face scrutiny and inward debate among humans.

Priyan, the upcoming artist dutifully recognizes the teachers who taught him painting “ Maniccam my teacher gave me requisite training. While I was in 1 st standard I joined Jawahar Bal Bhavan run by Pondicherry Government and gained efficiency by the training imparted there. Having learnt for 5 years I got the Best Child Award for Creativity in the year 1999. Then I joined Saint Joseph Art Academy and enriched my experience under the guidance of drawing masters Sampath, Nice, Subburayan etc. At present under the guidance of Rajaram, Lecturer in the Bharathiar Palkalai Koodam, Priyan continues his training towards perfection.

“I sent my painting to the Vishwakala Dharshini at Rajamundry in Andhra Pradesh for an exhibition. My painting won the second national level award. Emboldened by these responses, my parents advised me to hold an exhibition of my paintings at Kampan Kalai Arangam. The Progressive writer Association too had lauded my paintings. So far I had drawn more than 250 paintings”, Priyan speaks with ease and glitter in his eyes. It is my desire to awaken the people’s consciousness to combat terrorism and to light the candle of Peace at all homes on earth says Priyan.

Priyan Voltaire had also won many prizes for his oratorical skills. One thing is certain, the product of liberal progressive minded parents Priyan grows intellectually on his own and the milieu in the family is conducive for cultivating agreeing to disagree concept, the very essential ingredient of democracy at a family soil.

[Courtesy: New Indian Express:24 th September 2005]

Tamils had scaled greater heights in ancient times, and their mathematical skills wherein one out of eight lakh fractions was the least small quantity up to which they could calculate without a calculator or computer. The theorem of Pythagoras could be spelt out in poetic form in Tamil much before his times. Erambam, Kanakathigaram by Kakkai Padiniyar, Kilaralabham, Athisaram, Kalambaham, Tiribuvana Thilagam, Kanitha rathinam, Sirukanakku were the books which I referred says Kaari Nayanar who wrote Kanakathigaram, But all these books Tamils have lost. This book on Tamil history, culture, and literature will shed new light to refresh your memory....



N.Nandhivarman is the General Secretary of Dravida Peravai, a South Indian political party espousing Annaism.

"A world without beggar's outstretched palm, the miser's heartless stony stare, the piteous wail of want, the pallid face of crime, the livid lips of lies, the cruel eyes of scorn, a race without disease of flesh or brain, A land where life lengthens, fear dies, joy deepens, love intensifies and man regains his dignity, is what Aringnar Anna dreamt of and Annaism stands for" says the party manifesto.

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